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# THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

BEING THE LECTURES ON  
THE JOHN T. CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION  
AT THE  
BAPTIST BIBLE INSTITUTE IN NEW ORLEANS  
APRIL, 1922



*By*  
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## FOREWORD

THE lectures that compose the chapters of this volume were given in April, 1922, on the John T. Christian Foundation, at the Baptist Bible Institute of New Orleans, La. Some paragraphs in the third chapter, taken from my Lowell Lectures, published in the volume "Religious Life in New England" (1915), are used by permission of the Harvard University Press.

GEORGE EDWIN HERR.

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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE EARLY EUROPEAN BAPTISTS.....	1
II. THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS .....	26
III. THE BAPTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES.....	54
IV. THE BAPTIST OUTLOOK .....	85



# I

## THE EARLY EUROPEAN BAPTISTS

### THE ANABAPTISTS

THE age of the Reformation is one of the most complicated and fascinating in recorded history. The political and social and religious conditions of many centuries were suddenly subjected to strains that remodeled and transformed them all. It was the age of the Renaissance, when all educated Europe was brought under the spell of the revival of classical learning; it was the age when the fall of Constantinople closed the ancient trade-routes to the East, and compelled the merchants of the Low Countries, of France, and Spain, and Italy to embark on those adventurous voyages which resulted in finding a way to India, around the Cape of Good Hope, and gave the impulse to the vast enterprise of Columbus which made known a new world; it was the age when the invention of printing made possible the widest diffusion of ideas: it was an age when the consciousness of nationality was giving rise to new groupings of great populations into compact units; it was an age when on the one hand Christendom was narrowed by the onrush of the Turks into Central Europe, and on the other hand widened by the discovery of the Americas.

The discovery of the Americas by itself was sufficient to mark the dawning of a new era in Christendom, for it was like the introduction of a new planet into the solar system, changing the mutual attractions and repulsions of every body in it. But this enormous influence was reenforced and heightened by the events which I have just mentioned.

Until recent times the history of this period, for the most part, has been written in view of the great religious revolt which we know as the Reformation. And events have been interpreted almost wholly in the interests of a partisan religious propaganda. Within the last twenty years many scholars have seen that the religious phase of the first half of the sixteenth century was not the only one to be considered, and so we now have histories from the social and political and economic points of view. Some of these writers have thrown the religious aspect of the age so thoroughly into the background that they almost ignore it, but this is a position that, in my opinion, is entirely untenable. The religious issue is not the only one in that tremendous period, but it is central, and every other relationship and movement is affected by it. On the other hand, the religious issue cannot be adequately interpreted when studied in isolation. It must be brought into relation with the social, economic, and political forces that are manifest in the period.

But most of the older historians not only studied the religious issue in isolation, but they seemed to think the Luthern Reformation could be appraised

correctly apart from the contemporaneous religious movements. Of course they paid some attention to the Swiss and French Reformations. These could hardly be ignored, but the standard histories for the most part treated them very cursorily, and as to the great Baptist movement, it was hardly mentioned, except in derision.

The more recent church historians, however, have seen the error of this, and they have sought to put the Lutheran Reformation into some relation with the life of the time, as seen in France and Switzerland, and to connect it with parallel movements in the same period.

As a result of this correct attitude the story of the Baptists, or Anabaptists, as they are called by their enemies, or Re-baptizers, because they repudiated infant baptism, and baptized only those who made confession of their faith, no matter whether or not they had been christened in their infancy, has been thrown into salient relief.

Perhaps there is no matter in the entire range of church history upon which modern opinion has undergone such a radical change, as in the estimate of the Anabaptists. Even Ranke, writing only a few years ago, appeared to regard the Münster fanatics as typical of the whole movement, and confused the ideas for which the firebrand Rothmann stood with those of Roger Williams and the Rhode Island pioneers. There was some excuse for this gross misrepresentation. Most of the authorities upon which historians relied were the hostile accounts and polemical



treatises of bitter opponents of the Anabaptists, and there were few other sources, for almost universally, in the court records of sentences against the Anabaptists, it was prescribed that their writings should be burned.

Until recently our only source for the text of the original creed of the Swiss Baptists was the controversial pamphlet which Zwingli wrote against it. Fortunately he quoted each article before answering it. Piecing together these quotations, we were able to reconstruct the creed. But there has been discovered recently in the archives of the Canton of Schaffhausen a copy of the original creed in German. It is greatly to the credit of Zwingli that he gave a faithful version of it. The only changes he made result from his Latinized form.

Recent investigations have greatly added to our source of material. Such works as Barges' "Bodenstein" (Carlstadt) have put many matters in an entirely new light. The articles in the last edition of the Britannica, Hasting's "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics," or the new Schaff-Herzog could not have been written a few years ago. Even yet there are many gaps in our knowledge, and it is quite certain that the archives at Vienna contain invaluable material which has been very imperfectly explored.

Most of the older historians have paid far too much attention to attempting to trace historical continuity between the Baptists and different sects in the Roman Church or in apostolic times. There are

undoubtedly such resemblances, but they are not necessarily due to a causal time connection. Frequently the same theory has occurred to different minds which have had no communication with one another. The records of discovery furnish many illustrations of this. There is nothing strange in the fact that the theory of natural selection should have occurred to Darwin and to Wallace, working entirely independently of one another. We ought not to be surprised that candid minds coming freshly to the study of the Scriptures should have reached similar conclusions as to the essential Christian doctrines. That is precisely what seems to have taken place in the Anabaptist development.

Professor Lindsay has shown the error of the common view that Luther first gave Germany the Bible in the vernacular. The earliest presses in Germany printed many more editions of the Bible than of the classics. Twenty-one editions of the Psalms in German appeared before 1509, and twenty-five of the Gospels and Epistles before 1518. No fewer than fourteen (some say seventeen) editions of the whole Bible were printed in High German and three in Low German during the last decade of the fifteenth and the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, all translations from the Vulgate. These German versions were largely, but by no means completely, displaced by Luther's translation. The Anabaptists generally held by the older versions, and these pre-Reformation German Bibles are said to have been in use almost two hundred years after the Reforma-

tion. The "common man," especially the artisan of the towns, knew a great deal about the Bible. It was the one book he knew and pondered over. As Cornelius says: <sup>1</sup>

Fired with the thoughts created in their minds by the reading of the Bible, simple men felt impelled to become itinerant preachers. The "call" came to them and they responded at once to what they believed to be a divine voice. Such men wandered about in rude homespun garments, often barefooted, their heads covered with rough felt hats. They craved hospitality in houses and after supper produced their portions of the Bible, read and expounded them. And then vanished early in the morning. We are told how Hans Hut came to the house of Franz Strigel at Weiss in Franconia, produced his Bible, read and expounded, explained the necessity of adult baptism, convinced Strigel, the house-father, and eight others, and baptized them then and there. He wandered forth the same night. None of the baptized ever saw him again, but the little community remained a small band of Anabaptists.

Whittier has described their methods of preaching the gospel in a beautiful and famous poem:

#### THE VAUDOIS MISSIONARY

"Oh, lady fair, these silks of mine are beautiful and rare—  
The richest web of the Indian loom which beauty's queen  
might wear;  
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck with whose  
radiant light they vie;  
I have brought them with me a weary way,—will my gentle  
lady buy?"

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Lindsay from Cornelius, *Geschichte des Münsterischen Aufbruchs*, 11, 49.



The lady smiled on the worn old man through the dark and  
clustering curls  
Which veiled her brow, as she bent to view his silks and glit-  
tering pearls;  
And she placed their price in the old man's hand and lightly  
turned away.  
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest call,—“ My gentle  
lady, stay! ”

“ Oh lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre flings,  
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty  
brow of kings;  
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not  
decay,  
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a blessing on  
thy way! ”

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel where her form of  
grace was seen,  
Where her eyes shone clear, and her dark locks waved their  
clasping pearls between;—  
“ Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth, thou traveller  
gray and old,  
And name the price of thy precious gem, and my page shall  
count thy gold.”

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow, as a small and  
meagre book,  
Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from his folding robe  
he took!  
“ Here lady fair, is the pearl of price, may it prove as much  
to thee!  
Nay—keep thy gold—I ask it not, for the word of God is  
free.”

The weary traveller went his way, but the gift he left behind  
Hath had its pure and perfect work on that highborn maid-  
en's mind.

And she hath turned from the pride of sin to the lowliness of truth,  
And given her human heart to God in its beautiful hour of youth!

But those who caught the vision and carried the fire were not always to be classed with "the common man," as the phrase of the times went. Take for example the "Zwickau prophets" as they were called, who preached Anabaptism in Wittenberg while Luther was at the Wartberg, where he was concealed from the imperial authorities after the Diet of Worms. They so aroused the people that Luther broke away from restraint and appeared suddenly in Wittenberg to confront and oppose them. Who were these prophets? Assuredly not common men. Their leader was Carlstadt, who was one of the most honored professors at Wittenberg, and had stood beside Luther at the Leipsic Disputation. The preaching gifts of Zwilling had led to his appointment by the magistrates as principal teacher at Zwickau, and Melancthon himself had gone far in the Anabaptist way until Luther's "shepherd's crook" rather roughly recalled him from that rocky, thorny, and perilous way.

This was the group of cultivated and earnest men who were the forerunners of the Anabaptist movement in Germany.

The spread of similar ideas in the Swiss cantons was also very largely due to the work of educated men. Röubli, Stumpf, and Brötli were ordained preachers in the Roman Church. Manz and Grebel

were men of learning and substantial citizens of Zurich; while Hübmaier was a doctor of theology at Ingolstadt, a university chaplain, and preacher at the Cathedral of Regensburg.

Undoubtedly much is to be said for the view held by the older historians that the Anabaptists were simply the Radicals of the Reformation who pushed the implications of Luther to their logical conclusion. Much also for the position that they trace directly from the reforming movement of the medieval sects, which subordinated the church and all its mechanism and institutions to unmediated relationship to God. Among these were the spiritual Franciscans, the Brethren of the Common Lot, and the great mystic fellowship, but I think it will be found that the principal force in organizing the movement and in determining its main features came from a fresh reading of the Scriptures now made available by the art of printing, and that it had the characteristic features of every attempt to interpret the Scriptures by literally minded men, on the basis of isolated individual judgment.

Perhaps their greatest indebtedness to the mystics was their emphasis upon the inner light. They did not commonly hold that the Scriptures were to be understood through rational processes alone. There was a divine illumination that was the portion of every regenerate of soul. Their repudiation of infant baptism did not depend so much on any specific text of Scripture as upon their generic conception of the Christian life as the outcome of regeneration and the



divine gifts that accompany it. To their minds it was as preposterous to receive an unregenerate person into the fellowship of the saints as to welcome a deaf man into a society of musicians, or a cripple into an athletic association. They spent but little time in answering the common arguments from infant baptism of households, or the parallel between circumcision and the Christian ordinance. Their inference was not from stray references in the Scriptures susceptible of rival interpretations; they held that the whole trend of New Testament teaching made for their contention that baptism was only for the regenerate. They denied with all their vigor that baptism was in any sense whatever a means to regeneration. They held always that it was a symbol of an experience that had been entered into. This is not to say that here and there may be found those classed under the general name of Anabaptists who did not firmly hold this doctrine. It is not clear, for example, that the leaders of the shameful episodes at Münster held it consistently. But, by and large, the name given in opprobrium justly marks the cardinal doctrine of the whole party.

The other Anabaptist doctrines hold a close relation to this central position. The ideal was that of a self-governing congregation, with the Bible as its law, and interpreted literally. The bond of union between believers was not any external organization but the common spiritual experience generated by the contact of the human soul with the Christian revelation. To the common objection that this doc-

trine opens the way to endless varieties of opinion they replied, that the Bible was one and inner light was one, and that they would rather trust the Written Word and the Inner Word than any of the man-made devices to secure unity which had so often been proved injurious and oppressive.

They held that the State was a necessary evil. Many of the early creeds declare that a Christian should have no share in it, nor take any form of oath. They were thoroughgoing passive resistants, but Hübmaier, their most representative leader in Switzerland held that Christians have a large duty as citizens, and Hübmaier's pamphlet on "The Sword" reads like a modern answer to a passivist.

No one can read this literature without a vivid conviction as to their sympathy with those under oppression—the vast laboring class of Europe. Belford Bax, who has done so much to elucidate the more obscure phases of Anabaptist history, probably is too anxious to prove that the Anabaptists are the forerunners of the modern Socialists. In a certain sense that is true, but only a few extremists among them held to the compulsory redistribution of property. They believed that the Christian man would voluntarily share his goods with the more needy and that the fraternal spirit should pervade all property rights.

Their attitude in regard to this matter closely resembled that of the early church. There the sharing of goods was in no sense what it is often called, "an experiment in communism"; it was a

spontaneous manifestation of the new spirit of fellowship. And a similar realization of the spirit of the Christian *koinonia* would have similar results today.

As with most literally minded students of the Scripture the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation had a peculiar fascination for the Anabaptists, but though millenianism plays an important part in some developments, it cannot be fairly said that it ever became a common or essential doctrine of their churches.

The developments of the German and Swiss Anabaptists are so distinct that they should be sharply separated. The evolution of the German section was profoundly influenced by a social crisis and social needs, and had a distinctly socialistic cast. The period of the Reformation in Germany was an epoch marked by social as well as religious reconstruction and revolt. The standard economists have always enlarged upon the influence of the Black Death in the fourteenth century in emancipating labor. All over Europe labor had become scarce. In lands like England where the law fixed the amount of the laborer's service and commercial influences had substituted money payments for services, the position of the peasant was greatly strengthened; but in Germany where there was no law but the Roman code brought in by the Church, which regarded the serfs as slaves, the Black Death made the position of the peasantry infinitely harder. The overlord made up for the scarcity of labor by increased exactions.



The revolt of Luther against Rome mightily heartened the German peasantry. Might not freedom from the Pope mean freedom from Charles V, the feudal system, and Roman law? Did not the assertion of the rights of conscience lead to the assertion of the rights of the whole personality? These questions that had been stirring in Europe for two centuries were made exigent and absorbing by the initial success of the Reformation. The famous "Twelve Articles," which stated the demands of the Peasants, today look modern enough. In every half-civilized community these rights are at once conceded. Luther threw in his lot with the princes, and in the Peasants' War that followed the refusal of reform, he incited the most drastic measures against the peasants. Even Gieseler admits that "no traces of Anabaptist fanaticism were seen in the Peasants' War"; but it cannot be doubted that the Anabaptists' revolt against the prevailing religious order, whether Roman or Lutheran, encouraged the revolt against social and economic oppression. Thomas Münzer, who was one of the Zwickau prophets, assailed all constituted government, and advocated an ideal commonwealth with absolute equality and community of goods. It is at this point that German Anabaptism separates from the Swiss attempts at reform. In Germany Anabaptism was tinged with a socialistic cast, which is wanting in the corresponding movement in Switzerland.

This socialistic type reached its climax in Münster in Westphalia when the Lutheran pastor, Roth-

mann, with several prominent citizens endeavored to set up a theocracy, after banishing the bishop. Gross premillennial conceptions began to prevail. One of the leaders, Bockhoff, known as John of Leyden, declared that he was the successor of David and preached communism and polygamy. For a year Münster, which was the scene of the wildest orgies, held out against the besiegers, and when the city fell it was followed by the wholesale massacre of the Anabaptists. The three principal leaders, however, were reserved for torture, unexampled in the story of the early Christians.

The enemies of the Anabaptists have always made the most of the Münster episode. They have represented it as typical of the whole movement, and in the early days of the New England settlement the connotation of the word was worse than that of anarchist or bolshevist today. To call one an Anabaptist was to classify him as outside the pale of civilized humanity.

In Germany the Baptists have never outlived the shame of Münster. I have heard German professors more than once raise the question whether or not modern Baptists shared at all the ideas and practises of these crazy fanatics. But it is now admitted by those who have given the matter any serious attention, that it was only a radical left wing of the movement that sympathized with the excesses of Münster, and that the primary interest of the great body of German Anabaptists was that of establishing a church that should conform as closely as pos-



sible to the apostolic model, based on the regenerate experience and the close fraternity of all its members.

In Switzerland the development was almost wholly religious. The group that disputed at Zurich with Zwingli, seeking to win the town council to their views, as Zwingli, in a similar disputation, had won it to repudiate the Roman Church, were gentlemen and scholars. Among the peasantry of Switzerland were no such social or economic grievances as aroused their brethren across the Lake of Constance to madness. The development at Zurich was based on a fresh and careful study of the New Testament.

The issue between Zwingli and his friend Hübmaier turned almost wholly on infant baptism. Zwingli himself did not occupy a clear or strong position. In his exposition of the articles he defended in his first disputation, he makes this statement: <sup>2</sup>

Although I know as the Fathers show, that infants have been baptized occasionally from the earliest times, still it was not so universal a custom as it is now, but the common practise was as soon as they arrived at the age of reason to form them into classes for instruction in the Word of Salvation. And, after a firm faith had been implanted in their hearts and they had confessed the same with their mouth, then they were baptized. I could wish that this custom of giving instruction were revived today. Otherwise they suffer a great and serious disadvantage if they are not as well religiously instructed after baptism, as the children of the ancients were before baptism, as sermons to them still preserved prove.

<sup>2</sup> "Ulrich von Zwingli," Jackson, p. 243.

The sentence accorded to these men who dared to attack infant baptism is of a piece with the intolerance of the times. Zwingli wrote to Vadian, March 7, 1526:

It has been decreed this day by the Council of Two Hundred that the leaders of the Anabaptists shall be cast into the tower and be allured by a bread and water diet until they either give up the ghost or surrender. It was also added that they who after this are immersed shall be submerged permanently. [A clear indication that the Swiss Baptists had begun to practise immersion.] Your father-in-law Senator Jacob Grebel, father of Conrad—in vain implored mercy for Conrad.

Conrad Grebel died of the plague that year. Manz, his close friend, was drowned in the Lake of Zurich. Hübmaier was burned at the stake in Vienna, March 10, 1528.

The inevitable question is, Why did Luther and Melancthon in Germany and Zwingli in Switzerland fight so strenuously for infant baptism, which today in non-sacerdotal churches is largely an interesting survival. The fact seems to have been that the question of infant baptism involved the problem of the nature and constitution of the church. The Anabaptists conceived of the church as consisting solely of those who had shared the experience of regeneration. Baptism, they said, was not a means to this experience, but a confession of it. The early German and Swiss reformers found it impossible for them to conceive Church or State as separate from

one another. And if they are united, it is almost inevitable that the standard for admission to the church and to citizenship be identical, and naturally enough this becomes baptism. Baptism is the evidence of naturalization in both bodies. In certain European states it is said that the license to pursue an infamous trade is conditional upon the applicant's having a baptismal certificate. Baptism holds much the same relation to a State, which is united to a Church, that circumcision held to the Hebrew theocracy. As in the Hebrew State, freedom of choice could not be allowed in the circumcision of children, without leading to a complete break-up of its constitution, so it was with infant baptism, when Church and State were really one body as they were in both the Roman and Lutheran communities. There is abundant evidence that all the leaders of the Reformation realized that there was much to be said for the Baptist contention, but they saw that they confronted a condition and not a theory, and that the patriotic was subtly merged with the religious issue.

The extent to which Anabaptism became an issue in Reformation times is shown by the fact that the Augsburg Confession, the Decretals of Trent, the Second Helvetic, the Belgic, the Scotch, the Westminster Confessions, and the Formula of Concord, all inveigh against it; and it is not going too far to affirm that one purpose of Calvin in his "Institutes" was to prove to Francis I that the Reformers were not all Anabaptists and might safely be tolerated.



Modern researches have revealed the extent to which Anabaptism prevailed in Central Europe as a result of the persecutions which scattered the leaders far and wide. A map like that which accompanies Professor Lindsay's "History of the Reformation" is a revelation to those who have regarded the Anabaptists as an obscure and neglectible faction. In the Low Countries throughout the Rhine Valley, and in a broad continuous stretch from Switzerland through Central and South Germany, Austria, and Hungary, and Poland, and North Italy were important Anabaptist centers. It is significant that the important Unitarian congregations in North Italy and Hungary owe their origin to Anabaptist preachers.

The persecutions of the Anabaptists assumed almost incredible proportions. A veritable reign of terror prevailed through Central Europe. Keller has shown that the Austrian authorities not only made use of wholesale executions but delivered up the peasants into the power of their mercenary troops. From 1528 the Swabian League sent large companies of armed troopers to scour certain districts, giving their leaders authority, without law or trial, to put to death the fanatics they caught and to hunt them like wild beasts. In Bavaria, where the Anabaptists were very numerous, the Duke ordered that those who recanted should be beheaded, and those who did not should be burned. Buckle in his "History of Civilization" says<sup>3</sup> that by 1546 thirty

<sup>3</sup> Vol. 1, p. 189.

thousand persons had been put to death for Anabaptism in the Low Countries.

Every writer with whom I am familiar, whether hostile or friendly to the Anabaptists, dwells on their remarkable heroism in face of the most cruel tortures and painful deaths. Sometimes sensitive men and women, tortured beyond human endurance, recanted, but usually recanted their recantations and with serene spirits faced beheading or burning.

The career of Hübmaier, the accomplished scholar and professor, the intimate friend of Zwingli, is a case in point. After the disputation of December, 1526, the Zurich Council demanded that Hübmaier should depart from the city or recant his doctrine. In the meantime messengers had arrived from the Emperor Ferdinand demanding that Hübmaier should be delivered up to them for punishment. This the Council refused to do, and Zwingli takes great credit to himself for his magnanimity. Under this pressure Hübmaier consented to moderate his statements, and publicly read his recantations in the Church of Our Lady. Zwingli followed with an address. Then, to the consternation of all Hübmaier recanted his recantations, attacked infant baptism, and defended the baptism of believers only. He was hurried away and thrown into prison to be kept on bread and water until he recanted. Hübmaier says, <sup>4</sup>

The imprisoned were told they would be kept into prison until their death if they did not recant, so that they would

<sup>4</sup> Vedder, p. 130.

behold neither sun nor moon, and that all together, the living and the dead, should remain in that dark tower, until no one remained alive, so that in this way all should die together, perishing and rotting by the stench.

Zwingli grimly says Hübmaier was "allured" to recant his errors. In after years Hübmaier was deeply repentant for this act. The Council decreed that he should leave Zurich. He made his way to Nicholsburg in Moravia where Hussite doctrines prevailed. Within a few months the chief ministers had accepted the teachings of Hübmaier. In less than a year nearly twelve thousand persons received believer's baptism. In 1527 Hübmaier was seized by the Imperial authorities. Again he recanted but at the end, as to Cranmer and Savonarola, strength was given to him to meet his doom. Three days after, his devoted wife, Elizabeth Hughline, a woman who never dreamed of recantation and, constant to the very last, was thrown into the waters of the Danube.

Many attempts have been made by those Baptists who seek to maintain that there has been an uninterrupted succession of Baptist churches from the apostles to the present time, to trace the lineage of English-speaking churches through the Anabaptists and the Waldensians.

The truth seems to be that under the rule of the Duke of Alva and the hardly less exasperating rule of the Calvinists who dominated the Synod of Dort, many Anabaptists found a refuge in the Eastern counties of England about Norwich. One authority



places their number as large as thirty thousand. They were tolerated both by Elizabeth and James, and it was in their reign that Robert Browne, influenced perhaps by the ideas current in this community, worked out his theory of the church which he embodied in his treatise that lies near the sources of the modern Congregational and Baptist churches—the pamphlet “Reformation Without Tarrying for Anie.” Prof. Williston Walker has stated the exact fact:<sup>5</sup>

Anabaptist modes of thought, imported with these Hollanders into their new home in England, may have borne some fruitage.

I have said nothing about the mode of baptism, because that was not a primary issue with the Anabaptists. Their main contention was as to the spirituality of the church. All of them held that baptism could only be administered rightly to regenerate persons. Whatever their early practise as to the mode, their steady drift, as they studied the Scriptures and yielded to its authority, was toward immersion. But the great issue centered about a regenerate church-membership and its inevitable implications.

In this country the direct descendants of the German Anabaptists are the Mennonites, deriving their name from Menno Simons, who, more than any other man, rallied and unified the brotherhood, after the disgraceful outbreak at Münster. They number about eighty thousand communicants.

<sup>5</sup> “History of the Congregational Church in the United States,” p. 30.

By many historians the anti-Trinitarian leaders of the sixteenth century are classed as Anabaptists. There is no dispute that the Anabaptists were opposed to the rigid doctrinal definitions of the Greek and Roman creeds. Like the modern Baptists, they stopped at the New Testament statements and rested in them. But men like Denck and Hetzer of the Swiss group were practically anti-Trinitarians. Both were accomplished classical scholars. Luther, without giving credit, made a large use of their translation of the Prophets of the Old Testament. Denck is one of the most attractive personalities of the entire period. His essays on "The Law of God" and "On the True Love" deserve a high place in any collection of devotional literature. Only the latter has been translated into English by the American Mennonites. Denck passed away at the early age of thirty-two, but he left an impression on religious thought which time only deepens. Prof. Rufus M. Jones in his "Spiritual Reformers" pays Denck a beautiful tribute. Both Faustus Socinus and Servetus are classed with this group of Anabaptists, and the large influence of Socinus in Transylvania and Hungary is one of the forces accounting for the existence of so many Unitarian churches there. Singularly enough, till 1818 the existence of these Unitarian churches, with something like sixty thousand members, appears to have been unknown to English-speaking Unitarians, but since 1860 Manchester College, Oxford, has had a succession of students from these churches. Some have come to the



Harvard Divinity School and to Meadville. The Hungarian churches are usually represented at the May Anniversaries in Boston. But the succession of the Anabaptists in America is represented by the congregationally organized communions—the Congregational (Trinitarian and Unitarian churches), the Universalists, and the denomination of the Baptists. The Baptists have preserved most of the features of the Swiss group. There is probably no doctrine of Hübmaier that would not receive the hearty approval of the average Baptist congregation.

In closing, let me say a few words about the light that the Anabaptist movement throws upon the nature and limitations of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. It is by the aid of such contrasts that the real character of a movement is thrown into salient relief.

1. In the first place, the Reformation reveals itself in the light of such studies as totally undemocratic, and wanting even in sympathy with the religious rights of the common man. Luther's appeal to the Christian Nobility is a noble production. Here, and in "The Freedom of the Christian Man" we see the great typical German reformer at his very best, but the reform in religion that he contemplated must be accomplished by the princes who were to impose their faith upon their people. Such a statement is not too strong to describe the action of the Diet of Augsburg (1555) which established the principle *cujus regio, ejus religio*, which meant that the secular territorial ruler might choose between the

Romanist or Lutheran faith, and his decision was to bind all his subjects. If a subject professed another religion than that of his prince he was to be allowed to emigrate. I admit all that may be said in defense of this policy. I simply want to point the nature of the policy itself which made the Reformation hopelessly undemocratic. The Anabaptist doctrine, steadily gravitating toward the modern view of the separation of Church and State, recognized the immediate relation of the soul to God, and made religion consist in the response of the personality to the Christian revelation. A man's religion could not be controlled by the State.

2. In the second place, Anabaptism as contrasted with other Reformation positions emphasized the distinction between the sacramental and the evangelical construction of Christianity. Without expressing any judgment of these views I wish simply to point out that the Anabaptists in a thoroughgoing way antagonized the sacramental view. Their more careful exponents did not speak of "valid baptism," a term that is essentially a Romanist phrase. They held the Zwinglian view of the Supper. They repudiated the whole *ex opere operato* theory of the sacraments. Logically, they had deep affinities with the Quaker position. Indeed, the view of the sacraments taken by the Friends is a direct product of the Anabaptist agitation. Modern Baptists and the Friends spring from the same parentage, the Baptists from the earlier, the Friends from the later stage of Anabaptism; and there are not wanting

today some significant tokens that the union of Baptists with the Orthodox Friends would be easier than with any other denomination.

It is not difficult, if one is bent on doing it, to find material for maligning and disparaging the Anabaptists, especially if the evidence is carefully selected and taken out of its historic connection, but, looking at the movement as a whole, students of church history are beginning to appreciate it as prophetic of the modern and spiritual interpretation of New Testament Christianity. The Reformers dwelt too exclusively in the Pauline Epistles. The Anabaptists did much to recover the teaching of Jesus and to comprehend its human bearings. Their conception of the spirituality of the Church and its separation from the State, their ideas of the new brotherhood into which men are brought by a common experience of God's grace, and their insistence that the rights of property should be dominated by the law of love, are the precise marks of the new interpretation of Christianity in which forward-looking men rejoice. In spite of faults and limitations may we not apply to them the beautiful words of St. Francis de Sales, "They were of the order of the saints, and all the saints are of the order"?



## II

### THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

**B**ROADLY speaking, a line drawn between the towns of Oxford and Cambridge, England, marks the geographical division between Conservative and Progressive England. Oxford stands for the old ways in religion and politics. Cambridge, ever since the Reformation, has stood for moderation and progress. Archbishop Laud represents the extreme development of the Oxford temper, while John Milton incarnates the spirit of Cambridge.

✓ The counties north and east of Cambridge, especially Lincoln, Nottingham, Norfolk, and Suffolk, have been seats of Puritanism. There are several reasons for the responsiveness of this whole region to progressive ideas in religion. If one will examine the map which George Macaulay Trevelyan has added to his work on the Lollards, he will see, at a ✓ glance, that these counties are the ones in which the Lollards, as the followers of Wyclif were called, were strongest in the fifteenth century. That great man, one of the very greatest that the English-speaking world has ever produced, had not only put the Bible, in his inimitable translation, to which all English versions are so greatly indebted, within the knowledge of the English people, but he had taught a doctrine of personal faith as the condition of salvation that brings him very near to the evangelical

heart in every age. In this map, based on a thorough study of contemporary records, we have evidence that appeals at once to the eye, as to the type of religion that prevailed in these regions.

Again, while the tradition that many Waldensian refugees found asylum here may not be so fully substantiated as some have supposed, it is beyond controversy that the political and religious tyranny of Philip II in the Netherlands caused a large emigration to the East of England, and that these emigrants were more or less infected with Anabaptism. One authority states that there were thirty thousand Anabaptists in England by 1562.<sup>1</sup>

This is the region that became the seed-plot of British Nonconformity and Separatism. Here are Norwich and Boston, and Scrooby and Gainsborough, the birth-places of English Independency, in its two forms of the Congregational and Baptist denominations.

Those who are interested in maintaining what may be called, for convenience, successional baptism, that is, that there has been an unbroken succession of Baptist churches from the days of the apostles to the present, necessarily make much of the relationship of these Dutch Anabaptists in the east of England to the early English Baptist churches. The evidence is fragmentary and the strongest position that one who desires to hold this position, can take is to say with Weingarten, <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, "The Puritan in Holland, England, and America," I, 247f., 488, II, 180, and Griffis, "The New World," 1905.

<sup>2</sup> *Revolutions Kirchen in Englands*, p. 20.

The perfect agreement between the views of Browne and those of the Baptists, as far as the nature of the church is concerned, is certainly proof enough that he borrowed his ideas from them.

Without enlarging upon the contribution which The Newton Theological Institution has made to the elucidation of the beginnings of English dissenting churches, I may say that Mr. Champlin Burrage, who graduated from Brown University in 1896 and from Newton in 1899, held our Fellowship in Church History for 1904-1907, and after studying at Marburg and Berlin received the degree of Litt. D. from the University of Oxford and became librarian of Manchester College, Oxford, and afterwards of the John Carter Brown Library in Brown University. Mr. Burrage published "A New Year's Gift" in 1904, "The True Story of Robert Browne" in 1906, "The Retraction of Robert Browne" in 1907, and "The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research," in 1912.

These books are based upon manuscripts of Robert Browne that Mr. Burrage discovered in the Bodleian Library, and in the Library of Lambeth Palace, largely through his familiarity with Browne's handwriting. The "Retraction" was published under the special permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It is not too much to say that the result of Mr. Burrage's research has revolutionized the traditional conceptions of the beginning of English Dissent, and because of his findings even such a monumental



work as Dexter's "Congregationalism as Seen in Literature" must be revised and materially modified to bring it into harmony with undisputed facts.

One serious difficulty that confronts the critical student of Baptist beginnings previous to 1582, comes from the fact that the term "Anabaptist" had very much the meaning that now attaches to the epithet "Anarchist" or in the last few years to "Bolshevist." When therefore Bishop Hooper writes to his friend Bullinger that the Anabaptists give him much trouble, we cannot be at all sure of what sort of people he has in mind. All that we can be certain of is that they were at odds with some points of his teachings and practise. And it should be remembered that some of the Anabaptists were quite as notorious for their theory that Jesus did not take his flesh from his mother, but brought his body from heaven or had one made for him by the Word, as for their attitude toward infant baptism.

Previous to 1582, we are dealing with a very confused situation. Perhaps our historians have been a little too ready to characterize as Baptists those who maintained a single practise or a doctrinal position which bears some resemblance to the present ideas of the denomination. It is not improbable that several like-minded believers united in a common service, and we may go further than that and say that they may have organized little churches, but, as historical students, we cannot point to any one of them as inaugurating a definite movement, or as the fruitful mother of churches.

In 1582, however, we stand on firm ground and we come in contact with a remarkable man, Robert Browne, whose character and contribution to religious thought have only been made clear during the last few years.

Robert Browne (1530 [?]-1636) was born a gentleman, in the English sense of the term. His direct ancestor, five generations back, had come from Calais, where he had acquired a fortune. He founded the hospital at Stamford for "decayed tradesmen," which still exists. His son built the Saints' Church in Stamford, and presented it to the parish. The family married into the nobility, and Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's great minister, acknowledged Robert Browne as his kinsman. Browne graduated from Cambridge A. B. in 1572.

He was deeply religious, and had a varied experience as teacher and unlicensed preacher. He received, however, a license to preach from the Archbishop of Canterbury, but he thought so lightly of it that one copy he lost, and the other he threw into the fire. As a preacher for a few months at the "Bennet-Church" in Cambridge, he gave an inkling of what was working in his mind by inveighing against "the calling and authorizing of preachers by bishops." Subsequently he removed to Norwich, the center of the Dutch immigration, where it is tolerably certain that he came in contact with the Anabaptists. At Norwich his views crystallized about two or three main positions—that a Christian church should be composed of believers, and that the call of



their spiritual leader rested not with the bishops but with the local church, and mingled with all was his revolt against prescribed services and read prayers of the English Church. What he wanted was a spiritual reformation, and gradually he reached the conclusion that "the kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, be they ever so few." Browne's own account of his ideas of the English Church service is sufficiently direct and spicy as to account for considerable of the opposition with which he met. For instance this is one of his descriptions of the Church of England service: <sup>3</sup>

Their stinted service is a Popish bead-roll full of vain repetitions (as if seven paternosters did please the Lord better than six) and as if the chattering of a pie or parrot were much more the better, because it is much more than enough. Their tossing to and fro of psalms and sentences is like tennis play, whereto God is called a judge who can do best and be most gallant in his worship, as by organs solfaing, prick-song, chanting, busing, and mumbling very roundly on diverse hands. For the ministers and people are bridled like horses, and everything appointed to them like puppies, as to hear, read, answer, kneel, sit, break off . . . The whole service is broken, disordered, patched, taken out of the mass-book, and a dumb and idle ministry maintained thereby, yea, a vain worship without knowledge or feeling.

It must be admitted that this is a harsh style of preaching. His followers, however, increased, and more than once Browne was imprisoned, but released through the powerful influence of his kinsman, Lord

<sup>3</sup> "True and Short Declaration," Sig. B.

Burleigh. The most significant of Browne's little books, four or five in number, are, "A Book which Sheweth the Life and Manner of all True Christians, and How Unlike They Are unto Turks, Papists and Heathen Folk" and "A Treatise of Reformation without Tarrying for Anie." Both these tracts were printed at Middleburg in Holland in 1582, whither Browne had gone, by the aid of the Dutch merchants in Norwich, with a little group of his followers.

In 1584, Browne returned to Stamford and made a journey to Scotland, and expressed the opinion that the best reformed towns in Scotland were not so good morally as the worst places in England. During one of his absences his first child, Joan, was born. On his return he found that the child had been christened at All Saints, Stamford. This was not at all pleasing to him, and he began to teach that it was not lawful to attend the services of the English Church. In one of the periods of mental depression to which Browne appears to have been subject, Lord Burleigh and Browne's father seem to have cooperated with Archbishop Whitgift to induce him to return to the Church of England. They succeeded, and from 1591 to 1633 he was rector of A Church, one of Lord Burleigh's livings.

For all practical purposes Browne's career ended in 1591. Probably he did his best in his new position, for he was a conscientious man, and may have been of some real value to the little hamlet. He appears to have employed a curate, during the whole period of his incumbency. It is doubtful if he ever

lifted up his voice in the church of which he was rector.

The records of A Church are not in Browne's handwriting from 1616 to 1626. Prof. Vernon Bartlett, of Mansfield College, Oxford, has suggested that Browne may have formed a covenanted company in his parish at A Church, during this period, and because of it have been deprived of his rectorship. Several such cases of secret separatism are known. Browne's first wife died in 1610. In 1618 he married again and built an addition to his thatched house, which is known as "the old chapel." The chimney bears the date of 1618 which coincides with the date of his marriage to Joane Story in All Saints, Stamford, where the record may now be found. These facts may point to the conclusion that Browne never departed inwardly from his first insight. He may have gathered a covenanted company of believers and, with the little fortune that came to him by marriage, built this commodious room for their worship.

The character of Browne is a strange puzzle. He was probably a highly sensitive man deficient in strength of will, but he had just and true flashes of insight, and these make his little book, "Reformation without Tarrying for Anie," a landmark in the history of modern religious thought. Let me in a few words try to summarize Browne's doctrine. His main proposition is that Christ is the Head of the church. In answer to the question, "Who today speaks for Christ?" he says, not the bishops who



had done too much evil to make that answer reasonable, but the voice of the whole regenerate company, guided by the elders and the "forwardest," by which he means those most advanced in the Christian life. Dr. R. W. Dale has well said that Browne believed that through this assembly of regenerate souls Christ speaks and they are to set up his kingdom.

Such a position today seems to evangelical Christians like a platitude, but in 1582 it was revolutionary. If you had asked the average Englishman in 1582 if he were a Christian, he would have looked at you with amazement, and would have replied, "Why, I am an Englishman, I was baptized in infancy, I live in this parish, and I am a member of the Church there." Now Robert Browne repudiated this whole position. He says little about infant baptism, but he claims that the church is composed solely of believers, and that the English parish system does not count in the kingdom of God. There is involved in this central position the great doctrine of the spirituality and democracy of the church, through which Christ speaks and works.

For a discredited man Robert Browne exercised wide influence on English religious thought in his own day. The "Brownists" became too numerous to be ignored. They are specifically mentioned by Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh, and in his last sermon to the Pilgrim Fathers Pastor Robinson of Leyden warned them not to suffer themselves to be called Brownists, not because they had not followed Browne, but because of the evil of such labels.



It is impossible to trace the diffusion of the Brownists throughout England, but it is clear that there were several scattered groups of them throughout the East of England and in the city of London, which ever since the days of Wyclif has been friendly to evangelicalism. Two neighboring villages in the north of Lincoln—Scrooby and Gainsborough—became the seed-plots of movements that became world-wide in their influence. At first the Brownists in these two places appear to have met together, but before long they became two separate congregations. The one at Scrooby with Clyfton and Robinson as pastors, and the other at Gainsborough with John Smyth as pastor. Both were Separatist churches of the Congregational order. The Scrooby congregation became the Pilgrim Company that settled at Leyden and then in 1620 came to Plymouth, Mass., in the Mayflower—the world-famous “Pilgrim Fathers.” From the second or Gainsborough congregation under the leadership of Smyth and his associate Thomas Helwys, we trace the first Baptist church organized in England, the history of which deserves more adequate attention.

This John Smyth was a unique character. Bishop Creighton says,

None of the English Separatists had a finer mind or a more beautiful soul than John Smyth, none of them succeeded in expressing with so much reasonableness and consistency their aspirations after a spiritual system of religious belief and practise, none of them founded their opinions on so large and liberal a basis.

Smyth received the M. A. degree from Cambridge in 1593, and in 1600 he was elected lecturer or preacher to the city of Lincoln, but did not hold this position after October 13, 1602, though only a few months before the City Council had assured him a salary of £40 a year for the rest of his life. We do not know just what opposition had risen against Smyth, though he was a man of such positive views and plain speaking that his ways were never in smooth places. Two small volumes of his printed sermons still remain, one discovered by Professor Whitsitt in the library of Immanuel College, Cambridge, and the first edition of the other is in Regent's Park College Library. The first is an exposition of the Twenty-second Psalm and the second of the Lord's Prayer.

From 1602, when Smyth lost his lectureship at Lincoln, to 1605, when he openly separated from the Church of England, his comings and goings are difficult to trace. Probably he spent much time in conferring with like-minded people, some of them certainly belonging to the English clergy and others high placed in the nobility, for Smyth was a competent scholar, with an excellent university standing, and many doors were open to him, but in 1605 the troubled waters of his life began to run clear, and he drifted to that region in the north which is like a wedge between Lincoln and Yorkshire. This is the district of Bawtry, Austerfield, Scrooby, and Gainsborough. In all these villages and in many of the manor houses an extreme form of

Puritanism found its home. Probably those who were sympathetic with the revolt against what they called the evils of the English Church had no regular place of meeting, but Scrooby and Gainsborough, about ten miles apart, became the two centers, and in 1606 this group divided into two churches. John Robinson and Richard Clyfton became pastors of the church at Scrooby, subsequently to be known as the Church of the Pilgrim Fathers, and John Smyth of the church at Gainsborough. It is a moot point whether the occasion of this division may not have been the departure of the Gainsborough group for Amsterdam, in 1606. It is at least doubtful whether the two churches existed contemporaneously side by side. William Bradford has given a memorable account of the organization of the church before the division in 1606. He writes: <sup>4</sup>

So many therefore of the professors as saw the evil of these things in these parts and whose hearts the Lord had touched with a heavenly zeal for his truth, they shook off this yoke of anti-Christian bondage and as the Lord's free people joined themselves, by a covenant of the Lord, into a church estate, in the fellowship of the Gospel to walk in all his ways, made known, or to be made known, according to their best endeavors whatsoever it should cost them.

The view that a church rests upon a covenant between its members is a departure in ecclesiastical history which has received far too little attention. The Old Testament precedent from Nehemiah prob-

<sup>4</sup> "History of Plimouth Plantation," p. 13.



ably is not the germ from which the theory grew, but is a convenient bit of evidence to support a position that rested on other grounds. Pastor Robinson of Leyden put this view of the church in an ultimate form when he said: <sup>5</sup>

We hold and affirm that a company consisting though but of two or three separated from the world . . . and gathered into the name of Christ by a covenant made to walk in all the ways of God made known unto them is a Church, and so hath the whole power of Christ.

It is worth noting that these believers not only pledged themselves to walk in the ways of the Lord already made known to them, but in ways "to be made known." It will be recalled how this attitude figures in the farewell sermon of Pastor Robinson to the Pilgrims when they were leaving Leyden in 1620. Winslow paraphrased that sermon in these famous words:

We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether he should ever live to see our faces again: but whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and his blessed Angels, to follow him no further than he had followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry. For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet *to break forth out of his holy Word*.

To these men the faith once delivered to the saints was not a coin of definite, fixed value, but a seed

<sup>5</sup> Robinson's Works, II : 132.



containing in itself the promise of illimitable harvests.

Both the Scrooby and the Gainsborough companies appear to have reached Amsterdam about the same time, the first under the leadership of Clyfton and the second under that of Smyth. Robinson did not go over until 1609 after the Scrooby company had removed to Leyden. During 1607 the opinions of Smyth became more radical. He published a little book, "Principles and Inferences Concerning the Visible Church."

We now turn to another group which became the center of influences that deeply affected the English Non-conformity. The city of London from the days of Wyclif had been favorably disposed toward evangelical views of the gospel. We are not surprised that the seed sown by Robert Browne produced its harvest here. In the Harleian Miscellany there is a record of the deposition of a witness taken about 1588. He is describing a religious meeting of people whom he thoroughly understands. He said:

In the summertime they met together in the fields, a mile or more about London. There they sit down on a bank, and divers of them expound out of the Bible so long as they are there assembled. In the wintertime they assemble themselves by 5 o'clock in the morning at that house where they make the conventicle for that Sabbath Day, men and women together. There they continue in the kind of prayers and exposition of the Scripture all the day. They dine together; after dinner make collection to pay for the diet, and what money is left some of them carry to the prison, where any of their sort be committed. In the prayer one

speaketh, and the rest do groan or sob or sigh, as if they would wring out tears, but say not after him that prayeth. Their prayer is extemporal. They teach that all stinted prayers and read service is but vain babbling in the Lord's sight, and hath neither promise of blessing nor edification, for that they are but cushions for such idle Priests and Atheists as have not the Spirit of God, and therefore to offer up prayers by reading or writing unto God is plain idolatry . . . In all their meetings they teach that there is no Head or Supreme Governor in the Church of God but Christ, and that the magistrate hath no authority to appoint ministers in the Church, nor to set down any government for the Church which is not commanded in God's word. They teach that a private man may preach to beget faith, and now that the office of the Apostles is ceased, there needeth not public ministers, but every man in his own calling is to preach the gospel . . . They hold it unlawful to baptize children amongst us, but rather choose to let them go unbaptized.

Associated with this group, or with one like it, was John Greenwood, A. B., Cambridge 1580-81, who became convinced of the unscriptural character of Episcopacy, and Henry Barrowe, A. B., Cambridge 1569-70, who had entered on the practise of the law with the promise of distinction. He even attracted the attention of Lord Bacon, who describes his conversion. He says: <sup>6</sup>

Barrowe led a wild and ungodly life. But walking one day in London, with one of his boon companions, he heard a preacher at his sermon very loud, as they were passing his church, upon which he proposed to his companion that they should go in.

<sup>6</sup> Works, II, 507.

God so blessed what they had heard that, to quote Lord Bacon, the fast young barrister

made a leap from a vain and libertine youth to a preciseness in the highest degree, which alteration made him very much spoken of.

These two friends, Greenwood and Barrowe, devoted themselves to a study of the church and substantially reached the conclusion of Robert Browne. Browne's writings had been in circulation about four years. Both these friends were executed in 1592. They are mentioned by name in Bradford's "Dialogue."<sup>7</sup>

The conception of church government reached by these friends was a combination of the democracy of Robert Browne, and the Presbyterianism of the Calvinists. And they put their conclusions in a little tract, "The True Description out of the Word of God of the Visible Church."<sup>8</sup> It is clear that the London group was organized as a church in 1592 with Francis Johnson as pastor and John Greenwood as teacher.

Francis Johnson had been expelled in 1589 from the University of Cambridge, of which he was a Fellow (1585), for his Presbyterianism, but he found a comfortable post as pastor of the English Church in Amsterdam. He seems to have prowled about the printing-offices in Amsterdam a good deal, and lighted upon one of Greenwood and Barrowe's tracts.

<sup>7</sup> Young's Chronicles, p. 427.

<sup>8</sup> Dort, 1589.



He was appointed the agent of the English ambassador to intercept these books at the press and have them burned. He saved from the fire only two copies. But looking them over changed the course of his life. He became convinced that the writers were in accord with the Scripture. He resigned his position, went to London, sought Barrowe in prison. After the execution of Greenwood and Barrowe, proceedings were dropped against the congregation on the understanding that they would leave the country, but the authorities kept their hands on Francis Johnson and his brother George. The emigration of this group to Amsterdam gives us the London-Amsterdam Church, in some sense the mother-church of British Non-conformity.

Our main interest in this story, from the point of view of Baptist development, is that when Smyth went up to Cambridge, Francis Johnson had completed his college course and was Smyth's tutor. The undisputed date for the organization of the London-Amsterdam Church is 1592, and Johnson was acknowledged as its pastor though he did not reach Amsterdam until 1597. We can imagine the keen interest of Smyth in the development of the religious ideas of his old friend and teacher with whom he must have had many interviews in London.

I have dwelt on this episode to show that Baptist ideas of the organization of the church did not come from the interpretation of the Scriptures held by any one man. These conceptions were widely entertained. They were working like leaven in several



different groups and only gradually came to organized expression.

When Smyth reached Amsterdam it would have been natural for him and his party to unite with the Johnson Church. It is a moot point whether or not he did so. At any rate it was not for long, and in 1608 his work "The Differences of the Church of the Separation" shows that his breaking off communion with the London-Amsterdam Church was on grounds that would hardly commend themselves to the average Christian. They were that translations of the Scriptures should not be brought into the church, but that the original Hebrew and Greek only should be used; that only believers might contribute to church funds—an anticipation of the "tainted money" discussion. In the meantime it is clear that Smyth became familiar with the Mennonite view of the church, and in March, 1609, he published his tract "The Character of the Beast." In this he contends that

infants ought not to be baptized because, first, there is neither precept nor example in the New Testament of any infants that were baptized by John or Christ's disciples, and second, Christ commanded to make disciples by teaching them, and then baptize them.

Smyth's "The Character of the Beast" is one of the ablest attacks upon infant baptism ever written.

We now come upon another issue. Smyth had not so far repudiated the traditional doctrine of the priesthood as to be willing to abandon successional

baptism. He held that what has been called "valid baptism" could only be administered by one who had been "validly" baptized. There must be a tactual succession back to the apostles. Where was this succession to be found? If the Roman Church had it, it was too corrupt for him to receive it at their hands. Did the Anabaptists, even the Mennonite form, have it? He did not know. And so he cut the knot, just as Roger Williams did years later in Providence, and baptized himself. John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Church at Leyden, says,

Mr. Smyth baptized first himself and next Mr. Helwys, and so the rest making their particular confessions.

A long discussion has taken place as to the mode of baptism Smyth employed. Positive evidence is not conclusive, and the disputants have usually reached conclusions that are in accord with their denominational affiliations.

Subsequently Smyth became convinced that the Amsterdam Mennonites were a church and had true baptism; certainly they practised believer's baptism, but it seems to me that they varied in the mode—sometimes it was by aspersion and sometimes by immersion. But the mode was not an issue with Smyth. What he wanted was believer's baptism and successional baptism. These he thought he had in the Mennonite Church. And the first was primary, for he wrote at this time, "I deny all succession except in the truth." Forty-one persons joined with him in seeking this new affiliation, but the Mennon-

ites never received him. They looked at Smyth as a disturber. At length in 1615 thirty-one remaining members entered the Mennonite communion.

But the faction of the Smyth Church that did not go with him in his changes organized with Thomas Helwys as pastor. Helwys was of excellent family, but not a college graduate. Apparently he was well to do for Smyth boasted that he had never taken any of Helwys' money. In 1611, Helwys with his church returned to England, because their countrymen were without the light of truth. They came, they said, to preach the free love of God and the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ. We know what sort of a gospel they brought. A study of the Four Confessions issued by the Smyth-Helwys group, the first English Baptist creeds, discovers their positions. Their general theological attitude is Arminian. They repudiate infant baptism and maintain that all infants "are undoubtedly saved, which is to be understood of all infants who live in the world." They repudiate apostolic succession, whether applied to the ministry or specifically to the ordinances. They declare that

the magistrate by virtue of his office is not to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, nor compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine.

Many of the Dutch Anabaptists in London united with this congregation, which is commonly regarded as the first English Baptist church. Professor Masson in his life of Milton treats with sympathy



and insight the doctrine of this church as to religious liberty. In a familiar passage he says:

This obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depository for all England of the absolute principle of liberty of conscience, as distinct from the more stinted principle advocated by the general body of the Independents . . . It was, in short, from this dingy little meeting-house somewhere in old London that there flashed out first in England the absolute doctrine of religious liberty.

The repressive policy of James I bore hardly on the Baptists, and among the pleas for redress sent to the King was one by Leonard Busher, who apparently was a member of the Helwys Church. It is entitled "Religious Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience." His argument for religious liberty is as convincing as John Smyth's argument against infant baptism, but incidentally it throws light on the mode of baptism practised by the Helwys Church. The date is 1614. It says:

And therefore Christ commanded his disciples to teach all nations, and baptize them; that is to preach the word of salvation to every creature of all sorts of nations that are worthy and willing to receive it and such as shall willingly and gladly receive he has commanded to be baptized in water, that is dipped for dead.

Three lines of argument have been used to show that we should not accept this account of statement which shows that immersion of believers was practised by this congregation at this date. It is said that the "Plea" was printed in Holland and does not show the English practise, but it purports to show

the English practise, and for the matter of printing practically the entire controversial literature except that maintaining the position of the Established Church came from Dutch presses. To print such things in England was to incur peril of imprisonment, confiscation, or banishment. Secondly, it is said that the purpose of the "Plea" is to commend religious liberty, and the allusion to baptism is incidental. Most lawyers would say, I think, that instead of weakening the evidence, its incidental character makes it all the stronger. In the third place, it is claimed that the Helwys Church may have believed that immersion was the true mode of baptism, while not practising it, but it seems hardly fair in the interests of a theory to make this devoted band guilty of an hypocrisy, which was not of the slightest conceivable profit.

We need not accept all the accounts of enthusiastic denominational historians as to the increase of the number of churches in fellowship with the Helwys congregation. Undoubtedly the seed was scattered, and by 1622 there were seven or eight such groups. They were all Arminian, and were recruited in part from the Dutch Anabaptists in England, especially from the Mennonites. It is interesting to note that for many years they retained some distinctively Mennonite practises, such as foot-washing. In England these churches are known as General Baptists in opposition to the Particular or Calvinistic Baptists. By 1660 the membership had reached 20,000. During the eighteenth century several of these

churches became Unitarian. The Calvinists asserted that this defection was on account of their Arminianism. But the Wesleyan revival recalled the churches generally to the evangelical position, and the New Connection of General Baptists organized in 1760 is closely associated in the Baptist Union with the Particular Baptists. It now remains to speak of the rise and growth of the Calvinistic or "Particular" Baptists—the group that has become by far the largest and most influential.

In 1616, four years after Helwys' return from Amsterdam, Henry Jacob, Oxford M. A., 1586, who seems to have followed Johnson as pastor of the English colony, returned from Holland thoroughly imbued with Johnson's idea of the church. He established his congregation at Southwark, London. It is in this church more than any other that we may best study the discussions which give rise to the separation between modern Congregationalists or Independents and Calvinistic Baptists. Jacob himself emigrated to Virginia in 1624, and he was succeeded by John Lathrop, Cambridge A. B. Three matters agitated this group, viz., believer's baptism, successional baptism, and immersion as the mode. This church was the field on which these questions were threshed out. Parties arose within the church, and it was repeatedly divided and subdivided. There were those who held to infant baptism, successional baptism, and immersion—the position of the Church of England; others held to believer's baptism, and successional baptism; others to believer's baptism



and immersion. Every possible permutation of these positions is found in this congregation. The so-called Kiffin manuscript, discovered by Principal Gould, of Regents Park College, in 1860, threw the Baptist world into a heated discussion on account of the report of the division that took place in this church in 1640, in which it is stated that a party in the church was convinced that baptism should be by immersion, and to quote the exact words, "none having then so practised in England to professed believers," and that baptism must be transmitted by succession from the apostles, and so sent over one of their members to Holland, who received baptism from the Dutch Church, and then on his return baptized the members of his party.

There was nothing particularly novel about this record. Crosby, in his "History of the Baptists" published in 1738, had stated practically the same thing. Only Crosby instead of saying "None having then so practised in England to professed believers" says,<sup>9</sup>

Some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not, as they knew of, revived the ancient custom of immersion—

a very different thing. It is by no means easy to reconcile either statement with the undoubted facts, especially with the Busher statement of 1614, though of course it is possible that the rather more highly placed members of the Jacob-Lathrop church knew

<sup>9</sup> "History," I, 101, 102.

little about what the obscure Helwys-Murton congregation were holding or doing.

But our main concern is not with the intricacies of this discussion, but to point out that from it there emerged two distinct groups. First, those who retained infant baptism and sprinkling or affusion as the mode, and who now constitute the modern Congregationalists or Independents, and secondly, those who repudiated infant baptism and practised immersion; these last now constitute the modern Calvinistic Baptists. Successional baptism lingered longer with the Baptist than with the Congregational group, and what is known as the "Landmark" movement appears to have been a recrudescence of successional baptism in America.

The organization of the Baptists around three doctrines which had been in process for half a century, now took an impressive form. Religious liberty, believer's baptism, and preservation of the primitive mode became the rallying-points. These questions were wholly in the realm of ecclesiology, not of theology. Theologically this Calvinistic group had far more sympathy with the theology of the Thirty-nine Articles or with the Westminster Confession than they had with the Arminianism of the Helwys group. Neal, the historian of Puritanism, states that in 1644 there were fifty-four Baptist congregations in England—forty-seven in the counties and seven in London—practising immersion.

We have reached a landmark in Baptist history when we come to the Confession of Faith issued by

these fifty-four churches in 1644. This Confession, after giving an exposition of Christian doctrine according to the Calvinistic theology, pronounces baptism

an ordinance of the New Testament, given by Christ, to be dispensed upon persons professing faith, who upon profession of faith ought to be baptized, and afterwards to partake of the Lord's Supper.

It then specifies that the way and manner of dispensing this ordinance is dipping and plunging the body under water.

For myself in these days when the mania for creed-making or creed-tinkering has come upon so many groups in all denominations, perhaps I may venture the opinion that it is safe to stand in the old ways. Arminianism and Calvinism are not today live issues. Neither has been answered, both have been superseded. Most of our churches, no matter what some extremists might advocate, do not propose to disfellowship faithful men who are seeking to serve Christ, on these grounds. For my part I would be willing to take both the Amsterdam Confession of 1612, and the English Confession of 1644 for substance of doctrine, interpreted in the light God gives us today.

I shall have accomplished my purpose in this survey if I have made it clear that the really great movement that we call Baptist history in Great Britain and her colonies does not trace from any one man, or any clear line of physical succession from



the early church. The succession is not physical, it is spiritual. It is what John Smyth happily called it, "a succession in the truth." I have no doubt the views of Baptists have always been held by some Christians. Some have held them as we hold them today, others have held them in different proportions with a different perspective. But what happened in England in that great age of Elizabeth and James and of the Commonwealth was that in the clash of parties views held in solution precipitated, and Presbyterianism was hardened into the Westminster Confession, and the doctrines of the Baptists were crystallized in the Baptist Confessions of 1612 and 1644.

In closing may I say a word about the men who stand foremost in this movement. It is entirely too easy to characterize them as fanatics, or as hare-brained enthusiasts. That would be very misleading, and I want to guard against any such impression from my descriptions of their views or work. The ministers were gentlemen and scholars, Robert Browne, Richard Clyfton, and John Robinson, John Smyth and Thomas Helwys and John Morton, Henry Jacob and Henry Jessey. They were all men of light and leading. And even if at times men like Browne and Smyth seem to have carried their logic to irrational extremes, we must remember that that was the drift in that unsettled age, and that without exception they were not only good men, but men of learning, of natural gifts of leadership, of eloquence, and of personal charm. We read over and over

again of "the sweet persuasiveness" of John Smyth, whose trenchant pen might leave another impression. And we must not forget one of the most interesting personalities of them all—not a Cambridge or an Oxford man, not highly placed in the social world, not a minister, a plain sensible merchant, a typical business man—William Kiffin. A poor boy, robbed by his guardians of his inheritance, he made his way by enterprise and business capacity until he became an alderman of London, and a very rich man. Being convinced that the Baptists held the truth, he identified himself with this despised sect. He was thrown into jail six times for attending Baptist meetings. Everything he touched prospered financially, and he devoted his wealth to the Baptist cause. There are few Baptist enterprises of the period that did not feel the vivifying touch of his benevolence. And he did not confine himself to the bestowal of his fortune, he was a preacher and evangelist and threw his whole soul into the work of the kingdom. This was the type of man who carried the feeble and despised cause to its place in the religious life of England. The English-speaking world owes the Brownes and the Smyths and the Kiffins a debt that can never be repaid.

### III

## THE BAPTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES

**I**N view of the history of the early English Baptists it is not strange that there should have been an infiltration of their ideas in the settlement of New England and of Virginia.

The outstanding illustration of this, of course, is the career of Roger Williams. John Fiske has admirably described the character of Williams, and his great contribution to religious and political thought which caused Bancroft to class him with Newton and Kepler as a benefactor of mankind. I quote Fiske's comprehensive and judicial paragraph: <sup>1</sup>

Among all the Puritans who came to New England there is no more interesting figure than the learned, quick-witted, pugnacious Welshman, Roger Williams. He was over fond of logical subtleties and delighted in controversy. There was scarcely any subject about which he did not wrangle, from the sinfulness of persecution to the propriety of women wearing veils in churches. Yet with all this love of controversy there never lived a more gentle and kindly soul. Within five years from the settlement of Massachusetts this young preacher had announced the true principles of religious liberty with a clearness of insight quite remarkable in that age. . . . The views of Williams, if logically carried out, involved the entire separation of Church from State,

<sup>1</sup> "The Beginnings of New England," pp. 114, 115.



the equal protection of all forms of religious faith, the repeal of all laws compelling attendance on public worship, the abolition of tithes and of all forced contributions to the support of religion. Such views are today quite generally adopted by the more civilized portions of the Protestant world, but it is needless to say that they were not the views of the seventeenth century in Massachusetts or elsewhere.

Many attempts have been made to remove from the authorities of Massachusetts Bay the reproach of having banished Williams under cruel conditions. Dr. Henry M. Dexter is probably correct in his contention that the Massachusetts Bay Company "was simply a private corporation chartered by the Government for the purposes of fishing, real estate improvement, and general commerce." Undoubtedly, the Company was within its strictly legal rights in banishing Williams or any one else to whom it took a dislike. But this is not the defense of the banishment put forth by contemporaries. They knew well that the Massachusetts Bay Company was far more than a trading corporation. The promotion of a profitable stock company was not at all the aspect of the enterprise that made an appeal to twenty thousand English Puritans. The impulse that led to this great movement and continued throughout it was well expressed by Rev. Francis Higginson when he said,<sup>2</sup> "We go to practise the positive part of church reformation; and propagate the Gospel in America."

Bitterly as the Baptists suffered from the Massa-

<sup>2</sup> *Magnalia*, 1629, III, sec. 1, p. 12.

chusetts Bay theocracy, they do it the credit of not attributing to it narrow secular motives. John Cotton and John Winthrop were conscientious men. They did not apprehend the principle of religious liberty. They only thought, like Saul the persecutor, that they were doing God service.

In his speech on the dissolution of Parliament in 1655, Cromwell described the fault of both Presbyterians and Independents when he said:

Is it ingenuous to ask liberty and not give it? What greater hypocrisy for those who were oppressed by the bishop to become the greatest oppressors themselves so soon as their yoke was removed?

History is rendering a tardy justice to the memory of Williams. The circumstance that the leaders of the Bay Colony were almost without exception university men, skilled in letters, gave them a marked advantage in impressing their views upon posterity. The defenders of Williams have not always been a match for their opponents, but Williams is his own best defender. A man who could win and hold the friendship of Sir Edmund Coke, John Winthrop, Sir Harry Vane, and John Milton, and enjoyed "close discourse" with Oliver Cromwell, is his own best champion, and a new appreciation of Williams' personality and of his contribution to the cause of human liberty has come from the more careful study of his own works.

The literary style of Roger Williams, like that of John Cotton, is somewhat crabbed and involved.

They wrote with haste, and poured forth their ideas upon paper without much care as to their order or best expression. But occasionally Williams, in writing on religious liberty, is conscious of wings and takes an almost lyrical flight. For example, in speaking of the armies of truth he frames a sentence that is worthy of Milton or of Jeremy Taylor. "The armies of Truth," he says, "like the armies of the Apocalypse, must have no sword, helmet, breast-plate, shield, or horse, but what is spiritual and of a heavenly nature."

The church which Williams gathered in Providence has generally been regarded as the first Baptist Church organized in America, March 16, 1639, though this is contested by those who hold that the church organized by John Clarke at Newport antedates this. It is certain that those who had been Baptists in England found that living was more comfortable in Rhode Island.

We should not omit to notice that Roger Williams's connection with the Providence church was short. He parted with the company he had gathered because of his doubts about the validity of his own baptism. The apostolic succession had been interrupted and apostolic authority had ceased. In this curious contention, carrying over the ideal of apostolic succession to baptism, as the Established Church in England had applied it to the ministry, we have the echoes in America of the discussion which at that very time was agitating the Jacob Church in London.



It is of interest to note that Henry Jacob subsequently emigrated to Virginia; and John Lathrop in 1634, accompanied by about thirty members, emigrated to New England, settling in Scituate and subsequently in Barnstable. This leaven of Anabaptism frequently reappears in the ecclesiastical history of New England.

The reasons for this extreme hostility of the Bay Colony to the Baptists are probably threefold.

In the first place, as I have already suggested, the Baptists were identified in the public thought with the Münster fanatics. The term Anabaptist came to have much the same connotation we now attach to the label anarchist. It was a general term of opprobrium. It is now clearly established that some at least of the Münster party, so far from being in any true sense Baptists, came to practise infant baptism. But the German and Swiss reformers took little pains to examine or treat fairly the men who carried their own principles further than they desired.

In the second place, the denial of infant baptism undoubtedly involved a most insidious and effective attack upon the Massachusetts theocracy. Rev. Thomas Cobbet, minister in Lynn and afterward in Ipswich, in a letter to Increase Mather, states this clearly. He says:<sup>3</sup>

And I add theyr very principle of makeing infant Baptisms a nullity, it doth make at once all our churches, & our religious Civill state and polity, and all the officers & members thereof to be unbaptized & to bee no Christians & so

<sup>3</sup> Mass. Hist. Coll., Vol. XXXVIII, p. 291.

our churches to be no churches; & so we have no regular power to choose Deputies for any General Court, nor to choose any Magistrates.

A third reason for this hostility to the Baptists was that the idea that a sound body politic could possibly be built on the principle of religious liberty was totally inconceivable to the Bay Colony people. The Half-way Covenant was the utmost concession that could be made, and that almost rent apart the theocracy. Furthermore, some of the earlier experiences of the Providence Plantations with fanatics and disturbers were not such as to commend the religious liberty for which the Baptists stood.

The hostility to the Baptists soon had three concrete manifestations in the Bay Colony. The first was the whipping of Obadiah Holmes.

In July, 1651, the Massachusetts authorities learned that Clarke and Holmes and Crandall from Newport were on a visit to a fellow Baptist in Lynn, William Witter. It appears that while the visitors were holding a service in Witter's house they were arrested and subsequently removed to Boston. Clarke and Crandall escaped with heavy fines, but Holmes was imprisoned until September, when he was publicly flogged on his bare back. "It was grievous, as the spectators said, the man striking with all his strength with a three-corded whip, yea, spitting on his hands three times."

A second specific act of hostility was the deposition of the first President of Harvard College, Henry Dunster, because he espoused Baptist views.

Henry Dunster was matriculated at Magdalen College, Cambridge. It is worthy of note that John Harvard at Emmanuel College was for two years a fellow student at Cambridge with Dunster. Cotton Mather speaks of Dunster as having exercised his ministry in England. Dunster arrived in Boston toward the latter end of the summer of 1640, at the age of twenty or twenty-one. Soon after his arrival he purchased a property in Boston at the northeast corner of Court Street and Washington Street—where the Ames Building now stands—but he had scarcely settled in his new home before he was called to the presidency of the college of Cambridge. (August, 1640.) “Mr. Henry Dunster is now President of this college,” wrote Captain Johnson in his “Wonder-Working Providence,” “fitted from the Lord for the work, and by those who have skill that way, reported to be an able Proficient in both Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages, an Orthodox Preacher of the truths of Christ, very powerful through his blessing to move the affections.”

Harvard was only a school when Dunster took charge. He is usually reckoned as its first president, since the man who had had charge for two years was dismissed for unworthy conduct. Dunster served as President for fourteen years, and Quincy says of him:

He united in himself the character of both patron and President, for poor as he was, he contributed at a time of its utmost need one hundred acres of land towards its support; besides rendering to it, for a succession of years,



a series of official services, well-directed, unwearied and altogether inestimable.

President Dunster was apparently led by the treatment accorded Clarke and Crandall and Holmes to examine the matter of baptism for himself. He found, as he says, that "All instituted Gospel worship hath some express word of Scripture but Pedobaptism hath none." In October, 1654, Dunster was compelled to resign the presidency, after having been indicted by the Grand Jury for "disturbing the ordinance of infant baptism in the Cambridge Church." Cotton Mather says, "His unhappy entanglement in the snares of Anabaptism filled the overseers with uneasy fears, lest the students by his means should come to be ensnared." Quincy, in his "History of Harvard College," says of Dunster, "No man ever questioned his talents, learning, exemplary fidelity, and usefulness." Dunster removed to Scituate in the Plymouth Colony, where he became the successor to Chauncey and Chauncey became his successor at Harvard. He died February 27, 1659.

A third illustration of intolerance was the attitude of the theocracy toward the organization of a Baptist church in Boston. The movement began in Charlestown and appears to have had the sympathy of President Dunster. The story of the fines and imprisonments decreed upon this faithful group has often been told. For a time the little band had its home in Thomas Gould's house on Noddle's Island in the harbor, now East Boston, but in 1659, some of the members acquired a small building, then on

Salem Street, probably with a view of having it transferred to the church. The church bought the house and the land on which it stood February 9, 1670, but the stir which this action aroused led the General Court to enact a law the following May prohibiting the erection and use of a house of public worship without the consent of the freemen of the town and license of the County Court, or special order of the General Court, on penalty of forfeiture of house and land to the county.

The Baptists appear not to have attempted to occupy this house before February, 1680. It seemed to them that they had a perfect right to do so, notwithstanding the colonial law, for Charles II, in the interests of Episcopacy, had directed the colonial authorities to allow all Protestants liberty of conscience. The Court, however, acting upon the colonial law, ordered the marshal to nail up the doors of the Baptist meeting-house. The original order is preserved in the First Baptist Church of Boston. The royal decree, however, proved stronger than the colonial law, and after suffering some further annoyance the little band was permitted to use its property for worship.

John Russell, who became the second pastor of the church in July, 1679, following Thomas Gould who died October, 1675, wrote an account of the sufferings of the Boston Baptist Church which was printed in England, with a preface signed by the leading pastors of the English Calvinistic Baptists. But during the forty years that had elapsed since the

banishment of Roger Williams from Massachusetts Bay in October, 1635, great things had happened in England. The Long Parliament, the Civil War, the Commonwealth, the execution of Charles I, the Protectorate of Cromwell, and the restoration of the Stuarts, had followed in rapid succession. England had been successively High Church Episcopalian under Laud, Presbyterian under the Long Parliament and the Solemn League, Independent and Baptist under Cromwell, and Episcopalian again under Charles II. The Presbyterians and Independents and Baptists had undergone the suffering and humiliation of Saint Bartholomew's Day, 1662, when two thousand of the ablest and most saintly of the English pastors had been deprived at a stroke of their pulpits. Whatever the English Independents of 1635 might have held in regard to toleration, in 1680 they were broad-minded and charitable. The English Independents had moved on to a full appreciation and acceptance of Roger Williams's great doctrine; the New England Independents "stuck," to use John Robinson's phrase, where their fathers had left them. These London ministers show in this preface to Russell's tract their amazement that those who had come to the New World to escape persecution should persecute their brethren. "For one Protestant Congregation," they say,

to persecute another, where is no pretence to infallibility in the decision of all controversies seems much more unreasonable than the cruelties of the Church of Rome towards them that depart from their superstitions.



The English Independents had advanced much further toward the recognition of the rights of conscience than their Massachusetts brethren. The Bay Colony represented a type of thought that prevailed in England two generations before, and that type had been perpetuated in New England, while the Independents of Old England had advanced toward modern ideas.

There were at least two incidents that contributed toward a different attitude of the Standing Order as to the Baptists at the close of the seventeenth century. William Turner, who was one of the group of Charlestown Baptists that organized the church on Noodle's Island, greatly distinguished himself in defense of the Colony. In 1670 Turner was in prison, though Allen and Oxenbridge of the First Church and all the deputies in the Legislature voted for his release, but the magistrates in the Governor's Council were set against it. "Above thirty weeks," he says, "I have been lying in prison, to the possible ruin of my headless family. I am ready to serve this country to the utmost of my ability, in all civil things. In faith and order God alone can satisfy a poor soul." In the year 1675, when King Philip launched his conspiracy against the English settlers, Turner, mindful of the promise he had made in prison five years before, to serve the country, offered to the magistrates to raise a company among his friends and acquaintances to fight the Indians. At first Turner's offer was refused, but the next year when the fortunes of the war were turning against

the settlers, and the flames of burning buildings filled the sky from Casco Bay to Stonington, the magistrates came to Turner, begging him to renew his offer and raise his company. Turner recruited his company mainly from the members and adherents of the First Baptist Church. The officers were members of the church. Elder Drinker was lieutenant, Philip Squire sergeant, and Thomas Skinner clerk. There are thirteen names in the list of the Company he sent to Boston which correspond to the names of the members of the First Baptist Church, and there are twice as many more in this list of men whose mothers, wives, or sisters belonged to the Baptist Church.

On February 21, 1676, Captain Turner began his march to Northampton. King Philip's headquarters were at Northfield, and he had another camp at the Falls of the Connecticut, which bear today the name of the doughty Baptist captain, Turner's Falls. The surprise that Captain Turner sprang at this point is a notable episode in New England history and even Increase Mather was enthusiastic in his recognition of the brave exploit.

A second incident that contributed to the good feeling between the Boston Baptists and their Congregational brethren was the attitude of the Mathers toward the Baptists at the ordination of Rev. Elisha Callender as pastor of the Baptist Church. At this service the right hand of fellowship was given by the aged Increase Mather, and his son Cotton Mather preached the ordination sermon. The appreciation

of this courtesy of the Mathers on the part of Thomas Hollis, a wealthy London Baptist, led him to direct his benevolence to Harvard College. The Hollis family contributed the largest amount to the funds of Harvard College—about six thousand pounds—that it received from any one family until well along in the nineteenth century. We must remember that money then was worth about five times its value today.

Possibly the Half-way Covenant has sometimes been overemphasized as a principal cause of the Unitarian separation. The First Church of Boston, which strenuously opposed the covenant and called John Davenport from New Haven to become its pastor in order that that valiant defender of orthodoxy might lead in Boston against the weaker brethren, ultimately became Unitarian, while the Third Church, the Old South, which was organized in support of the Half-way Covenant, was the only one of the Boston Congregational churches that did not become Unitarian.

The discussions, however, that centered about the covenant inevitably had one effect. They called fresh attention to the reasonableness and scripturalness of the Baptist position, that if baptism had any such close relation to church-membership as all parties believed it had, only those who gave some evidence of possessing the Christian character should be baptized. The circumstance, however, that the position of the conservatives endorsed the essential correctness of the Baptists, did not make the Bap-



tists any more tolerable to some of the standing order. Still, in almost every community there were some who, however much they might dislike the Baptists, were broad-minded and fair-minded enough to see that the acknowledged evils of the Half-way Covenant were a lurid commentary on the peril of departing from the principle that the true basis of church-membership must be found in personal Christian experience.

The most important single factor in promoting the growth of the denomination was the Great Awakening itself. In 1740, the third generation of the settlement of New England, the religious impulse that a century before had created the theocracy of Massachusetts Bay Colony, had nearly died out. The situation of the Baptist cause for years was about as follows: The second Baptist Church in Boston, now the Warren Avenue Church, was not formed until 1743, as the result of the opposition of Rev. Jeremy Condry, pastor of the First Church, to the Great Awakening, as the Edwards-Whitefield Revival came to be known. The Baptist Church at Kittery, Maine, organized in 1682, was broken up by fines and imprisonment, and some of its prominent members, emigrating to South Carolina, gathered what is now the First Church of Charleston, the only Baptist church founded in the Southern colonies in the seventeenth century. In 1765, Rev. Hezekiah Smith, a graduate of Princeton, founded the First Church, Haverhill, the oldest Baptist church north of Boston.

The immediate result of the Great Awakening was

to run a line of division through New England Congregationalists, separating the formal adherents of the churches from those in whose lives religion was a vital experience. The majority of the Congregational ministers and churches opposed the revival, and it must be said in fairness that the eccentricities and fanaticism that developed in certain places gave some warrant for the antagonism. On the other hand, we can but feel, as we read the records and journals of the period, that a substantial reason for the opposition was the very formality and spiritual deadness into which many of the churches and members had sunk. The Baptist churches also shared in this religious declension, but their insistence on a regenerate membership had prevented their reaping the harvest of evil that the Congregational churches had gathered from the Half-way Covenant. The Baptists at first do not seem to have been enthusiastic about the religious movement, but gradually they came into a warmer sympathy with it. The Congregational churches that supported the revival came to be known as New Lights. And between the New Light Congregational and the Baptist churches there rapidly developed sympathies and affinities which led to some of the most interesting developments of the century.

In some cases the New Light members of Congregational churches sought membership in Baptist churches. In other instances they formed New Light congregations alongside the old Congregational churches.

The religious history of Middleborough, Massachusetts, is typical. Here Isaac Backus became pastor of the New Light Congregational church. But soon various questions asserted themselves. What was the Scriptural authority for infant baptism? What is the status of the baptized child in relation to the church? What is the standing in the church of those who, though they were baptized in infancy, unmistakably are not living a Christian life? Such questions greatly troubled Mr. Backus. At one time he preached a sermon repudiating infant baptism and advocating immersion. A few days later he withdrew from these positions, but ultimately, after two years during which he was "much tossed in his mind," he became a convinced advocate of the Baptist principles. The course of Mr. Backus made a serious division in the church, and five councils reviewed the situation. At length Mr. Backus became the founder of the First Baptist Church in Middleborough, of which he was pastor for fifty years.

Backus, though a man of excellent parts, had not enjoyed a college training, but he so improved his opportunities for general culture that his "History of the Baptists," originally published in three considerable volumes, is one of the standard works for the religious history of New England in the seventeenth century, and George Bancroft characterizes Backus as "one of the most exact of our New England historians" and his work as "marked by ingenuousness, clear discernment, and determined accuracy."



In other towns there was no such discussion as at Middleborough. The New Light congregation at once or gradually became a Baptist church.

I have noticed that the emigration of prominent members of the Kittery, Maine, Church to South Carolina led to the organization of a Baptist church in Charleston in 1682. William Screven was the leader of that group, and his name should always be held in affectionate remembrance by Southern Baptists. He served as pastor till 1706, when he retired to Georgetown at the age of 77. But even the fact that he was an old man did not prevent his receiving a call to the First Church, Boston. This, however, he declined, and returned to Charleston, where he served as pastor until his death in 1716. Charleston is the mother church of Southern Baptists, and from it Baptist influences have been propagated in widening circles. As Screven went to South Carolina from Maine, Shubael Stearns went from Boston and his brother-in-law Daniel Marshall from Connecticut to Virginia. Their preaching was thoroughly evangelistic and many were converted.

But this impulse that came from New England was not so strong as the one which had its center in Philadelphia. In some respects Philadelphia is the mother city of American Baptists. In Boston the Baptist cause was under constant persecution and suspicion. The ruling order in Massachusetts was very reluctant to part with any of its privileges. The closest parallel to the Massachusetts situation is found two generations later in Virginia, where the

relation of the Episcopalians to the Baptists was like that of the New England Congregationalists to all who did not accept their rule. Perhaps this accounts for the peculiar vigor of Massachusetts and Virginia Baptists, as a tree is more firmly rooted when in an exposed position it has to contend with the elements.

The liberal offers of complete religious liberty in New Jersey and Pennsylvania drew Baptists to this region as early as 1660. The church at Middletown, N. J., dates from 1688, Piscataway '89, Cohansy '90. This group of New Jersey churches which in 1795 numbered 35 with 2,177 members, was served by as able a company of ministers as we have ever had. Among them were Abel Morgan, John Gano, Hezekiah Smith, and James Manning. Smith and Manning were graduates of Princeton, and from the vision of these two men was to come the most powerful influence for an educated ministry.

In Pennsylvania there was about the same number of churches with half the membership. Naturally these churches in these two States were drawn closely together, and the result was the organization in 1707 of the Philadelphia Association. At first the meetings were for religious exercises only, but they naturally drifted into the consideration of other matters of common interest. Many of the brethren were very jealous of such an organization. They feared that it might trench on the independence of the churches, and come in time to exercise authority after the order of presbyteries. When the War-

ren Association was organized, bringing together the New England Baptists in a cooperation like that of Philadelphia it was stipulated that the union was "consistent with independency and power of particular churches, because it pretended to be no other than an advisory council, utterly disclaiming superiority, jurisdiction and coercive right and infallibility."

It is impossible to exaggerate the influence of the Philadelphia Association upon the South. What had been done in a previous generation by New England ministers and by small groups of Baptists that had emigrated from England or Ireland was slight compared with the flaming evangel of the men from the Philadelphia Association who both preceded and followed up the powerful appeals of George Whitefield. And no man left a deeper mark upon evangelical religion in America than Whitefield.

A new period in the religious history of the United States begins after the close of the Revolutionary War. The result of war, no matter how legitimate and holy the cause in which it is waged, is always to lower the moral tone of the nation and draw it away from religion. But the second decade after the close of the war witnessed a remarkable expansion. In 1740 there were but 21 Baptist churches in all New England, eleven of them in Rhode Island. In 1768 there were 69 churches, but in 1790 there were 286 with a membership of more than 17,000. There is no such record of rapid growth on the part of any denomination in the



entire history of New England. A similar experience was shared by the South and West. The Baptists from the Carolinas and Virginia evangelized Tennessee and Kentucky. In the former by 1790 there were 18 churches and 889 members, and in the latter 42 churches and 3,095 members.

The Baptists were the first to enter Ohio, and the church at Columbia organized in 1790 by Stephen Gano has the distinction of being the first Protestant church "in all the territory North and West of the Ohio River." The Miami Association dates from 1797. Illinois was evangelized from Virginia, and the church at New Design, St. Clair County, dates from 1796.

Professor Vedder has well said:<sup>4</sup>

It is impossible to estimate too highly the services of these men of faith and works. If they did not wander "in sheepskins and goatskins," like ancient heroes of faith, they wore deerskins. Living in the plainest manner, sharing all the hardships of a pioneer people, making hazardous journeys, in danger from floods, from wild beasts, and from fiercer Indians, the circuit preacher labored in a parish that, as one of them said, "took in one half of creation, for it had no boundary on the West." The preaching was of the rough and ready order, suited to the people addressed; the preacher being hardly more literate than his hearers, who were fortunate if they could read their Bibles and write their names. Yet, these men, uncouth as they would now seem, led multitudes to Christ, built up churches and laid denominational foundations, deep and broad. We who have entered into their labors do well to honor men whose shoes we are not worthy to unloose.

<sup>4</sup> Short History, p. 168.

1. There were three outstanding events in the development of the denomination after the Great Awakening: the gradual achievement of religious liberty, the new interest in education, and the development of the missionary impulse both at home and abroad. Looking back the comparatively short distance of less than a century, it is almost inconceivable that Massachusetts should have fallen so far behind the general movement of the age and have been so reluctant to come to an act of common justice. The innate conservatism and sense of privilege of a standing order, old prejudices, and sometimes, it is to be feared, the bitter spirit in which rights were asserted, all operated to keep Massachusetts far in the rear of other States. President Eliot composed for one of the inscriptions for the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893, this sentence: *Toleration in religion the best fruit of the last four centuries*. If this is a true judgment, Massachusetts was slow, very slow, in appreciating it. At length, in 1833, after coming before the Legislature at several sessions, an amendment forever separating Church and State in Massachusetts was ratified by the people. And the long struggle in which Baptists had been the most prominent was closed with a triumph.

2. The second event that contributed to the strength of the Baptists was the new interest in education.

In the first hundred years of American history three colleges had been founded—Harvard in 1636, William and Mary in 1693, and Yale in 1701.

During the next four decades twelve colleges were established. The first four were as follows: the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) in 1746; King's College (now Columbia University) in 1754; the University of Pennsylvania in 1755, and Brown University in 1764.

Harvard and Yale were controlled by the Congregationalists, the College of New Jersey by the Presbyterians, the University of Pennsylvania, King's College, and William and Mary by the Episcopalians.

The reasons that led the Baptists to found a college at Providence have been variously stated. Some of them will not bear examination. For example, it has often been asserted that the religious tests at the existing colleges put Baptist students under peculiar disabilities. But there is nothing in the charters of Harvard, Yale, King's College, or the University of Pennsylvania to bar Baptist students, while at Harvard some of the Hollis scholarships were by preference given to Baptists.

But, however liberal the college charters, there can be no doubt that there was considerable social discrimination against Baptist students. They did not belong to the ruling caste, and there can be no doubt that the college students of the day, reflecting the disposition of the Congregational churches toward the Baptists, made the lot of Baptist students uncomfortable. The potent reason, however, that led the Baptists to found a college was the rapid growth of the denomination after the Great Awakening of 1740, and the appreciation on the part of the



leading men of the great need of education among the rank and file of the churches.

Harvard inscribes on one of her gates a beautiful sentence from a contemporary letter:

After God had carried us safely to New England, and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the Civill Government; One of the next things we looked for was to advance Learning, and perpetuate it to Posterity; ✓ dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to our churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust.

The devotion and the vision that founded Harvard in 1638, founded Brown, one hundred and twenty-six years later, in 1764. The College did not originate in Rhode Island, but in that other center of Baptist influence, the Philadelphia Association. In 1756 the Association had established an academy at Hopewell, New Jersey, under the care of Rev. Isaac Eaton. In the papers of David Howell, the first professor in Brown University, there is this memorandum:

Many of the churches being supplied with able pastors from Mr. Eaton's academy and thus being convinced by experience of the great usefulness of human literature to more thoroughly furnish the Man of God for the most important work of the Gospel ministry, the hands of the Philadelphia Association were strengthened and their hearts encouraged to extend the design of promoting literature in the Society by erecting on some suitable part of the continent a College or University which should be principally under the direction of the Baptists.

It is evident that the purposes of the founding of Harvard and Brown were similar, but the charter of Brown discloses a conception in the minds of the founders of the relation of education to the welfare of the whole community that could only have been inspired by a large outlook upon the function of education. The preamble to the charter gives this reason for the establishment of the college:

Institutions for liberal Education are highly beneficial to Society, by forming the rising generation to virtue, knowledge and useful literature; and thus preserving in the community a succession of men duly qualified for discharging the Offices of life with usefulness and reputation.

A letter written by Isaac Backus to an English friend the year after the college was founded shows how the leaders looked at this enterprise. He wrote:

One grand objection made use of against Believer's Baptism has been that none but ignorant and illiterate men have embraced the Baptist sentiments. And there was so much color for it as this, namely, that ten years ago there were but two Baptist ministers in all New England who had what is called a liberal education; and they were not clear in the doctrines of grace.

I need not recount the various steps by which the New Jersey Academy became Brown University. The leaders were James Manning, the first president of the college, a graduate of Princeton; Morgan Edwards, a graduate of Bristol College, England; and Hezekiah Smith, a graduate of Princeton;

with Isaac Backus. This was the quartette that carried the great enterprise through to completion.

In 1815, the Maine Literary and Theological Institution, now Colby College, was established at Waterville, Maine. In 1825, the Newton Theological Institution was founded at Newton Centre. Brown, Colby, and Newton have been the principal agencies of New England Baptists for higher education. Brown has sent out six thousand nine hundred and eleven men; Colby, about one thousand five hundred; and the Newton Seminary, one thousand six hundred and seventy-five.

Professor Brastow of Yale in his work, "The Modern Pulpit," probably did not overstate the case when he gave these institutions the principal credit for raising the educational equipment of the American Baptist ministry. In addition to the two colleges and the seminary the Baptists have well-equipped academies in all the New England States except Rhode Island, and in Maine four academies act as the principal feeders of Colby College.

But the founding of Brown University was not wholly a New England enterprise. The whole country was interested in it, contributions came from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia, and before the Civil War many of the Southern Baptist leaders were educated at Brown and Newton.

Taking the country as a whole Baptists were indifferent to education, and in most cases to specific training for the ministry, even when they appreciated literary culture. Many held that the gospel



needed no aid from human learning, and that the educated minister would tend to rely upon his own resources rather than upon the Holy Spirit. This attitude, as Doctor Riley has shown in his "History of the Southern Baptists," assumed almost incredible bitterness. But this opposition was not by any means confined to the South. It still abides in New England, and Newton, the first school founded by American Baptists exclusively for theological training, has met this throughout the century of its existence. But there were prophets and leaders in those days, and the names of Richard Furman, Jesse Mercer, Henry P. Ripley, Josiah Penfield, W. M. Wingate, James B. Taylor are known and honored in every Southern Baptist household.

The story of the founding of the theological seminary, now known as the Southern, at Louisville, Kentucky, is a record of heroic self-sacrifice on the part of as noble a group of men as this country has produced. James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, William Williams, and Basil Manley, Jr., are inspiring names to all Baptists.

3. A third factor of great importance in the life of the denomination was the development of the missionary impulse in work both at home and abroad. In this history the one name of Adoniram Judson stands forth preeminent. Judson graduated from Brown University in the Class of 1807, and from Andover Theological Seminary in 1810.

In 1812, Judson, with three other young missionaries, was sent to the Far East by the American

Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which had been recently organized. On the long journey he busied himself in a study of the Scriptures relating to baptism, for he knew that he should meet in India the English Baptists. As a result of his study he became convinced that the Baptists were right in their view of the ordinance, and he was baptized in Calcutta, September 6, 1812. Soon after his companion, Luther Rice, followed his example. When Judson's letters to Rev. Dr. Thomas Baldwin of Boston and to Rev. Dr. Lucius Bolles of Salem, announcing his change of view and appealing to the American Baptists for help, were published, Baptists recognized the appeal as a divine call, and May 18, 1814, eleven States and the District of Columbia sent delegates to a meeting in Philadelphia. The result was the organization of "The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions." This is the first considerable work in which American Baptists were united.

In a certain sense the rapid increase of Baptist churches after the Great Awakening was the first factor in creating a denominational consciousness, and from that had come Brown University, but it was the missionary enterprise inaugurated in these circumstances, and led by a man like Judson, of rare scholarship, of apostolic devotion, and of a fiber to sustain sufferings that rank with those of the early martyrs, which transformed a group of churches that were as a lump of clay, incapable of

transmitting a vibration from particle to particle, into a block of marble responsive throughout its entire mass to every impulse.

The record of what was at first accomplished appears meager in the light of our larger undertakings of recent years. It is reported that the contributions of the first year were one thousand two hundred and thirty-nine dollars, and for the first ten years only seventy-three thousand dollars. The question soon arose whether work among the American Indians was not as truly foreign as work in India and Burmah. There was a general conviction that it was, and the impulse from Judson's appeal led to the establishment of missions among the Indian tribes. In 1826, when we had nine missionaries in Burmah, we had sixteen among the American Indians.

Undoubtedly many mistakes were made. For one thing, too much was attempted. Judson and Rice profoundly believed in an educated ministry. It seemed to be a legitimate thing for the Missionary Society to found a university. This was done and Columbian University was established at Washington, D. C. But when funds that were needed in Burma were used in Washington, it became evident that the Society must bend its energies to one task. Fortunately, however, it was out of their educational interest that there came the theological schools in Hamilton, N. Y., in 1819, and in Newton in 1825. The Society, however, continued the work among the Indians.



In 1826, there was so much discouragement about the financial outlook of the Society that the Baptists of Massachusetts offered to become responsible for its care and maintenance. This offer was accepted, and the headquarters of all the foreign missionary work of the Northern Baptists up to 1918 have been in Boston. Until 1845 the Society represented the denomination in the entire country, but in that year "The Southern Baptist Convention" was organized with headquarters at Richmond, Va. The division was wholly on the issue of slavery.

The responsibility assumed by the Baptists of Massachusetts with regard to this work has proved larger, perhaps, than our fathers imagined. But the Baptists of New England have rallied splendidly to their great task, and they have amply fulfilled that venturous pledge.

The headquarters of the Society were removed in 1920 to New York, the financial center of the country, and it is now proposed to carry them to Chicago, which is nearer the geographical center of the country, but not to the center of the Baptist constituency. New England has not looked unmoved on this transfer, but she may safely challenge either New York or Chicago, in any years to come, to do better proportionately than Boston has done.

It is impossible to overstate what the interest in foreign missions among Baptists that dates from the appeal of Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice, has done for the Baptist churches of the United States. Practically, it made them a denomination.

It enlisted them in an enterprise that interpreted to them anew the Christian gospel: it broadened the range of their sympathies and interests to the compass of the globe, and it created a new sense of common brotherhood. The centennial year of our foreign missionary work was observed recently, and it was noticeable how in both North and South there was a common recognition of the fact that Judson's appeal, long preceding any division between North and South, had created a common history and a common consciousness in which resided the fairest hopes for a perfect reunion of these two sections of our present denominational life.

Previous to 1832 there had been sporadic attempts to evangelize the expanding West, but the movement to enlist the resources of the entire Baptist membership of the States of the Atlantic Seaboard came from New England. Dr. Jonathan Going, of Worcester, and Dr. Lucius Bolles, of Salem, made a tour of the West and reported that the time was ripe "to arouse the Baptist community throughout the United States to systematic and vigorous efforts in the cause of domestic missions and that a general home mission society should be formed." The result was the formation of The American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1832, with headquarters in New York City, where they have since remained.

North and South during the last twenty-five years there has been something like an educational revival throughout the whole denomination, and large sums have been given to our institutions. The clearest-

sighted of our leaders see that in the perpetuation and enlargement of this enthusiasm lies, from a human point of view, the fairest prospect of continued denominational efficiency and progress.

The union of the Baptists in the missionary enterprise took place long before the division of 1845. After the Civil War a prodigious task awaited the Southern Baptist Convention, and the way it responded to the challenge elicits the admiration of every Christian heart. The problems of organization, of evangelization, of education were prodigious. The very numbers of Baptists made the situation appalling.

The census of 1920 shows that the Baptists of the United States now have 7,835,250. The Northern Baptist Convention reports 1,253,878, the Southern, 3,199,005, the National Baptist Convention (colored), 3,116,325. These numbers which involve corresponding resources impose responsibilities for the Christianization of the world from which we must not shrink.



## IV

### THE BAPTIST OUTLOOK

THIS enormous expansion of the denomination in recent years should not be the occasion for pride and self-exaltation but for a more sober realization of our responsibilities and opportunities. Mr. Gladstone remarked shortly before his death, when he was informed of the size of American fortunes, that a fortune of \$100,000,000 would be a menace to the Republic. In his view, the possession of such vast power could not be safely entrusted to one person, no matter how well-meaning and patriotic. Since Mr. Gladstone's time several American fortunes have been larger than a hundred million, and there are many corporations whose resources are practically wielded by one man, that control much greater capital. That more serious evils have not resulted from these vast aggregations of power is a tribute to the moral principles of those in positions to wield their power. But Mr. Gladstone's warning is not unnecessary. The menace is always present.

There is significance in the fact that our Lord's temptations at the outset of his career all turn on the use of power. No more subtle and powerful assault can be made on moral principle. This is precisely the temptation that confronts our denomination today. We may fail to recognize and respond to the responsibilities that our numbers and

resources involve. The fact that we are entrusted with two or five talents may lead us to play the part of the man with one talent.

Let us now glance at some of the conditions for the realization of the superb opportunities that open before our denomination.

## I

The first of these is loyalty to our historic Baptist principles. I do not think that it is so difficult to describe what these are as some appear to think. In my view, the essential Baptist principle is clear-cut and definite. It centers about the response of the human soul to the revelation of God in Christ. In that vital central principle are involved religious liberty, the authority of the Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the evangelical theology, and the constitution of the church.

I am not unmindful that in the last three centuries the Baptists have stood for many different things. Their positions have necessarily been influenced by the issues of the times, by the current interpretations of the Scriptures, and by the spiritual vision of their leaders. But in the history one salient fact emerges, and that is that the stream of the Baptist movement has shown the power of running water to purify itself, and the denominational interpretation of the gospel has constantly been closer and closer to the New Testament and the mind of Christ.

It is amazing, when we come to think of it, from

how many vagaries and fanaticisms we have been delivered. We have suffered from them. They still survive in some sections but, as a whole, the denomination has been delivered from them. Those early Swiss Baptists who gave us the Schleithem Confession were not only extreme passivists, but they did not believe that the true Christian should hold office, bear arms, or have anything to do with affairs of State. Hübmaier opposed this, and his contention practically gained way. John Smyth maintained that the Scriptures should only be used in public in the original Greek and Hebrew, and then recited and not read from a book. Until almost our own time strict Baptists in England held themselves so aloof from the currents of English life and tradition that they were almost wholly alien to the political, social, and literary movement of the age. They adopted not the Puritanism of Milton, but of Praise God Barebones. In our own country there were many of those who founded Rhode Island who sympathized with the narrow views of Roger Williams' first stage. In the Middle States and the South there were those who stood for the strictest observance of Biblical precedent, even to foot-washing and the "holy kiss." At one time it looked as if a great section of the denomination would be riven apart by the hyper-Calvinists, who practically denied the place of means in the economy of grace, antagonized revivals and Sunday schools and all missionary enterprises. At another period Campbellism made such inroads upon denominational coherence that for a time it



looked as if the work of a century was to be undone in a year. And there have been other movements and tendencies that probably are in your minds, which have been equally significant and disruptive, but the amazing thing is how the good ship has righted itself in every storm or, to change the figure, it is wonderful how by virtue of an inner coherence the body has resisted divisive tendencies. Our churches have shown a saving common sense. There has been a sound core that has never been corrupted or weakened. And while I speak subject to correction, I wish to express my deliberate conviction, as a student of history, that denominational coherence of unity never stood on a firmer basis than it does today. What James Russell Lowell says of democracy is true of us. "Democracy," he says, "is like a raft. You can't sink, but your feet are always wet."

The reason for this inherent soundness and coherence, in my judgment, is to be found in our basal position of the supreme importance of the response of the human soul to the revelation of God in Christ; in other words, in our emphasis upon the regenerate life, which finds its formal expression in believer's baptism. That is the doctrine that has separated us from every other denomination, and our entire history and growth is an illuminated comment on its significance and worth in the Christian system.

Let me indicate how this central faith has worked out in practise. The Philadelphia Confession, which is our oldest and by far our most widely accepted

creedal statement, and is the Presbyterian Westminster Confession modified so as to conform to the Baptist position regarding the Church and its relation to the State, contains an article on the Bible, of which my old teacher the great historian, Dr. Philip Schaff, used to say,

No other Protestant symbol has such a clear, judicious, concise and exhaustive statement of this fundamental article of Protestantism.

I presume that this article is familiar to all, but lest it should not be fresh in anyone's memory let me quote a sentence or two. After enumerating the canonical books, it says:

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the Author thereof; and, therefore, it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

We may be moved and induced by testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

This is a most remarkable statement, "resting the authority of the Scripture," as Doctor Schaff said,

upon its own intrinsic excellence, and the internal testimony of the Spirit, rather than upon the external authority of the Church, however valuable this is as a continuous witness.

Baptists do not expect that the convincing evidence for the authority of the Scripture will be the result of argument about it; they do not believe that the true method of approach is that of seeking to enforce its claims; they hardly expect the unregenerate soul to accept them, but the Christian experience answers to the Scripture as the mirror answers to the face, and a center of certainty is begotten in the soul of man by the testimony of the Spirit. It is exceedingly interesting to observe how the experience of missionaries confirms this. They tell us that it is impossible to make an impression on the heathen mind by starting with a doctrine of inspiration, or by elaborating any external evidences, no matter how cogent they may be to the mind of the preacher. The process invariably follows the line of the response of the hearer to the truth, to which his own heart and life bear witness through conscience and the work of the Spirit. And just as our fathers who accepted this great Confession did not believe that the authority of the Scripture rested upon human arguments, however strong they might be, so they did not believe that its authority could be invalidated by arguments. The believer had the witness in himself.

This emphasis upon the regenerate life and upon Christian experience indicates the process by which all the great Christian doctrines are vindicated.



The method of Jesus in the training of the Twelve is exceedingly illuminating. Nothing can be clearer, unless we are to eliminate the sixteenth chapter of Matthew from the gospel record, than that Jesus said nothing to his disciples about his divinity until very shortly before his death. That conversation at Cæsarea-Phillipi must be placed somewhere near the Crucifixion. For the space of some years he had been living with this chosen group. They had seen his manner of every-day life, they had witnessed his miracles, they had heard his parables. He had made no high claims about himself except to call himself the Son of man. He had just been living with them and letting that life make its natural impression. At last, as the shadows of the end were lengthening about him, and his own intuitive spirit discerned the Cross, he asked the question, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Their answer was ready: "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." And then came the intimate delicate query. If ever the lips of Jesus quivered it must have been when he asked that question. It was like the question that a man puts to the woman of his heart, when he must know how she regards him. Peter without hesitation responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "You are a blessed man, Simon, son of Jonas, for it was my Father in heaven, not flesh and blood, that revealed this to you." Goethe says <sup>1</sup> that Jesus from his youth upward

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, "Goethe," p. 88.

dares to equal himself with God, nay, to declare that he is God; astounding his familiar friends and irritating the rest against him.

That is exactly what Goethe might have done, but it is exactly what Jesus did not do. On the contrary, he lived a natural human life, as son and brother and neighbor, as laboring man and leader of a company of young men, his friends. How much more it meant to have these friends come slowly, almost imperceptibly, to the great conviction expressed by Peter in a flash of insight—come to it because they must, because no other view would explain what they felt about him, than to say this about him because they were echoing the opinion or conclusion of some one else! In the latter case it would probably be “saying,” and that would be all it signified. In the former instance the confession would spring out of the heart of personal conviction, reached through the paths of spiritual experience.

## II

In the second place, our history has taught sometimes, through bitter experience, the nature and limitations of this Christian liberty. Our doctrine of religious liberty necessarily comes from our central principle. Force of any sort has no relation to convictions or to love. These inward persuasions cannot be brought about by any external pressure. They must come as the voluntary movement of the human soul, and if they are not voluntary they are unreal and hypocritical. The story of our mainte-

nance of religious liberty on the Continent of Europe, in Great Britain, in this country, especially in New England and in Virginia, is one of the most heroic in the long annals of the triumph of the cause of human freedom. One is amazed as he studies the details of that long contest, unhappily not ended yet in some so-called Christian lands, at the fortitude, the strength of conviction, the readiness to sacrifice the most precious possessions and relations for the vindication of this sovereign right of the human spirit.

Our Baptist fathers were not generally acute philosophers or trained reasoners, but they were never seduced by the assertion that toleration and liberty were the same thing. Toleration is for me to say to you, "I will permit you to exercise this privilege." Liberty is for you to say to me: "I do not want your permission, I will have none of it. I do not claim a privilege. I exercise a right which you have no title to give or to withhold." Baptists have always stood for liberty, and they grounded their position on the fact that the acceptable worship and service of God must be unconstrained, voluntary, otherwise it was worthless.

The struggle is not over. One is disheartened at times by seeing how faint and partial the recognition of this principle is, even in our own country, under the pressure of circumstances and under the influences that are leading to the centralization and extension of the powers of government as an aftermath of the World War.



The direction in which we have sometimes erred has been a natural one. Our assertion of liberty has sometimes led to the exercise of an unethical and divisive independency. Sometimes it has almost been assumed that the hall-mark of a thorough-going Baptist was disagreement with some one else, and too often it has been not a disagreement with the doctrines and practises of other Christian communions, but a disagreement with those of the same household of faith. We need today, perhaps not so much as formerly, but still we need today clearer expositions in all our conventions and associations and local churches of the limitations of liberty as conceived by Baptists. Liberty is not a unifying principle. You could not organize a ball club, or a literary circle, or a chamber of commerce on the idea that every member should do as he pleases, which is what too many mean by liberty. But that is not what Baptists have meant by religious liberty. They mean the right of each person to be free, uncoerced, in forming his religious associations, but having once chosen his affiliation, liberty is limited by the general position or genius of the body with which he unites. We part with some share of our liberty whenever we cooperate with others. It does not make much difference whether the relationship is that of marriage or a business partnership or a political affiliation or church-membership. The principle is the same in all. The unifying tie in all these relationships is not liberty, but the agreements of ideals, which constitute the reason for the existence of the organ-

ization. Some associations make the unifying principle, which in political parties we call "the platform," and in ecclesiastical bodies "the creed" or "the covenant," very narrow and stringent. Others make it loose and general, but always, even in the most liberal churches, there is some line which the members cannot overpass without being disfellowshipped.

No one, to my way of thinking, has expounded the true principle of human association and cooperation more adequately than Prof. Franklin H. Giddings, of Columbia University, in his essay, "The Mind of the Many."<sup>2</sup>

Professor Giddings gives St. Paul the credit of being the first to announce the true principle of social organization. It rested upon the fact of like-mindedness:

Over and over again he forces this fact upon the attention of his readers and warns them to give heed to it. "Be of the same mind one toward another," he says to the Romans; and in the same epistle he prays for them that they may be of the same mind, that with one accord and with one mouth they may glorify their God. The Corinthians he beseeches to "speak the same things," to "have no divisions" among them, that they may be "perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." And the Philippians he implores to "stand fast in one spirit, with one soul; to be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord." . . . So far as we know, neither Greek nor Jew, before Paul, ever singled out this principle as the all-essential fact to be remembered in the development of any plan of social organization.

<sup>2</sup> "Democracy and Empire," p. 49f.

Professor Giddings adds:

Speaking only for myself, I must say that after many years of persistent thought upon this question, I am fully persuaded that Paul was absolutely and profoundly right . . . What then is a society? Obviously, it is any number of like-minded individuals, who know and enjoy their like-mindedness, and are, therefore, able to work together for common ends . . . But as certainly as like-mindedness is the cause of social stability, so is unlike-mindedness the cause of social variation. Only as men differ and dare to differ from their fellows can the church or party adapt itself to new conditions. Mere variation is not necessarily progress, and there is no progress to be discovered in division or in disorganization. A progressive society must change without losing its identity. In a progressive society a certain degree of unlike-mindedness coexists with a large measure of like-mindedness. Progress, in short, is the continuous harmonizing of a continually appearing unlikeness of feeling, thought and purpose with a vast central mass of established agreements.

I think we all recognize the justice of this exposition and its fidelity to the superb insight and discovery of St. Paul. This fits our denominational problem. It is to harmonize a vast central mass of established agreements with the variations and unlikenesses which are the secret of progress and advance. It is the ever-recurring contest between Conservatism and Progress. For the Conservatives to have their way would be to bring about social Nirvana. For the Progressives to have their way would be disruption and ruin. In a sense, every church, as well as the entire denomination, has to settle this problem for itself. What Conservatives



everywhere need to realize and to act upon is that there are rights of dissent, and that to restrict them within the narrow limits too often drawn by the least competent, is to doom the organization to a hopeless alliance with dead past. On the other hand, the Progressives need to realize that there are limits to dissent, perhaps not easily definable in words, but nevertheless inherent in the genius of the organization, which cannot be transcended without peril to major interests.

Our denominational history is strewn with wrecks from failure to recognize these principles. We have grown and prospered in spite of these losses. Still, one cannot help thinking how much larger service we might have rendered if it had not been for these tragedies.

### III

Another thing, it seems to me, a study of our history enforces, and that is the cleansing and enlightening power upon ourselves of propagating the Christian gospel, of evangelization, which means the proclamation of "the good news," the missionary task at home and abroad in all the earth. The supreme duty of the Christian individual and of the Christian people is the bearing of witness. "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1 : 8). "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you " (Matt. 28 : 19). These are the last recorded words of Jesus, as reported by Luke and by Matthew, and loyalty to them has been the secret of purity of doctrine, of spiritual agreements, and of triumphant enthusiasm. There have been many sermons, discussions, and volumes on missionary conquests, but comparatively little attention has been paid to the reaction of witness-bearing upon the inner life and the spiritual vision of those who have been loyal to the great commandments. Nothing ever did more for our denomination in England than the great insight and enterprise of William Carey, and in our own country it may be said that the message of Judson and Rice to the feeble and scattered Baptist churches of the Atlantic Coast really created the denomination. Then as the men of Boston and Virginia and Georgia began to respond to that moving appeal, the churches came to a denominational self-consciousness which has never yet been dissipated or seriously weakened. Even the terrific strain of the Civil War did not destroy it, and for many years a letter from a Baptist church has passed at its face value everywhere. It is as good in New Hampshire as in Texas, or Nova Scotia, or Saskatchewan. And today nothing is more certain to revive the inner life of a church, to cleanse its faith and to lift it into the realm of unity and peace than zealous enlistment in the work of carrying the gospel to others. It has been justly said that Wyclif was a rebel against the Church of

his day, but he interpreted the nobler and more permanent convictions of Christendom when he maintained that "preaching was the best work a priest could do, better than praying or administering the sacraments."

And we have always been in peril of a serious error when we have failed to see that the command of "the Great Commission," as it is called, is simply the expression of the genius of the religion of Jesus. It is not an arbitrary order, such as might be given to a servant or a soldier, a direction that he is simply to obey without an inner response to its reasonableness and necessity. The story of the Duke of Wellington, who said that the missionary had but one task and that was to look at his "marching orders," "the Great Commission," and obey it, wholly misses the finer aspects of the Christian's relationship to the gospel. "I call you no longer servants but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth." The man who has really caught the spirit of Christ, and been deeply moved by the gospel, realizing what it does for him, cannot help seeking to share his blessing with others. One of the great missionary texts of the New Testament is in the Epistle of James: "If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto him, 'Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled,' and ye give not them the things that are needful for the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2 : 15, 16.) Our times have greatly responded to these words taken literally, but too many of us have missed their finer



and larger implications. We have failed to realize that there is a spiritual nakedness and starvation, and that these spiritual needs make their own mighty appeal to the Christian heart. The bare command of "the Great Commission" may be sufficient for the legalist, but the Christian is not a legalist, and he realizes that witness-bearing unto all the earth, so far as we can reach, is duty and privilege wrought into the very genius of the Christian revelation.

Paul writes to the Galatians, "Who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?" (Gal. 3 : 1.) What exactly did he mean? Those Galatian Christians had never seen Christ. They were not present at the crucifixion. It is clear that what was in his mind was that when Christ was preached to them for the first time the tragedy of redemption was enacted in their experience. Before they heard the gospel, it was as though Christ had never lived and died. But when they heard it they were brought into relation with it. Then, "Christ was openly set forth the crucified." May we not dare reverently to draw the sublime inference from this declaration, and declare that when we are preaching the gospel we are doing what God did when he sent his Son into the world, for we are bringing men into relation with him? And the gift of God in the Cross of Christ is bestowed in the preaching of the gospel. Then the ultimate motive to evangelization becomes sympathy with God. We share his work; we enter into deep interior fellowship with his love and his purpose of

grace. These are the reasons why the work of propagating the gospel reacts so profoundly upon the life of the Christian. It is not simply because we are obeying a command in doing this, though that has its own peculiar reward, but because in doing this we sympathize with the spiritual nakedness and hunger of those who do not have the gospel, and because we sympathize with the gracious purposes of God.

The history of our denomination amply illustrates the spiritual rewardfulness of the missionary enterprise. On the whole, it shows that the reaction upon our churches from propagating the gospel at home and abroad has been the principal factor in purifying our theology and emphasizing our profound agreements in the evangelical faith. The command of conscience is authoritative in the realm of action, just as the demand of reason is imperative in the realm of thought. And the harmony of the two is realized when the two obediences unite in a common devotion.

#### IV

In the last place, our history demonstrates the importance of education, and especially of an educated ministry. Perhaps one of the bitterest conflicts ever waged in the denomination has centered about the need of an educated ministry. Both the Northern and Southern churches were profoundly agitated by it, and while the cause of education has won all along the line, there is skirmish fighting still

going on, and there is still much to be done for a complete victory. Through monotheism was the great message of Israel, and though Jesus said that the first and great commandment is, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength" (Mark 12 : 29f.), and though we declare, if we use the so-called Apostles' Creed, "I believe in one God, Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," though all these voices testify to monotheism, as a matter of fact many Christians are really polytheists; they do not believe that the God who gave us the revelation of the gospel is the God who made the sea, and whose hands fashioned the dry land, and they show that they do not by seeking to antagonize religion with science or science with religion. If one Deity made the world and another gave us the gospel, there may well be antagonism between the two realms, because the two gods do not agree, just as Homer tells us of the quarrels between the gods of Mt. Olympus. But if we believe in "One God, Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," the antagonism, if there be any, in the nature of the case, must be between our imperfect or false interpretations of the works and the word of God. The two revelations interpret one another, and the clearest vision of either is bound up in the amplest knowledge of the other. In a day when pure and applied science have made such enormous advances, so that every sane mind is bewil-



dered with them, it is not open to religious men, if they are monotheists, to slur or disparage the teaching of science. Scientific men are by no means infallible, and theologians have not invariably been impeccable. The more the teacher of religion knows of modern science the better. A large mastery of it might enable him more adequately to use the method of Jesus, and to see in the falling sparrow the witness to law and purpose, as centuries later Newton saw them in the falling apple, and to see in the reddening sky at eventime a witness to the law and purpose that moves through human history. But without laboring the argument, it seems to me that we all admit that the preacher of the gospel should speak from a rich and ample and worthy inner life.

When John Calvin organized his school at Geneva for the training of ministers, he brought thither the best teachers in Europe. No modern college president was ever more ambitious in organizing a faculty to secure the most competent instruction than was John Calvin. But Calvin soon woke up to the realization of another fact, and that was that an educated ministry demands an educated laity. His reasoning was this: We cannot have the Scriptures adequately expounded except by trained men. The Bible itself touches so many civilizations, embodies so many interests, impinges on life at so many points that it can only be justly interpreted by those of the best equipment, and only educated hearers can adequately respond to such unfoldings of divine truth. That was the logical basis of Calvin's appeal and sac-

rifice in founding the famous university at Geneva, which still flourishes. There is no break in that logic. And it was this irrefutable line of reasoning, and not any vague theory of democracy, that planted the school beside the church on the bleak hills of Scotland, at Montauban and Nismes and La Rochelle, and wherever the Calvinists settled in France, in New England villages, on Western prairies, and in Southern counties.

We must have an educated ministry adequately to interpret the gospel, and an educated laity to respond to the gospel. The demand for education comes from the nature of the gospel itself. This is not to say that great results may not be brought about by the preaching of unlettered men. This is not to say that education can take the place of personal piety and the constant blessing of the Holy Spirit, but it is to say that if the preaching of the gospel means something more than the repetition of a formula, if it means the utterance of a living man who has responded with all his nature—heart and intellect and will—to the Christian revelation, we must have ministers and laymen who, like Moses and St. Paul, have brought the treasures of discipline and learning to the service of God. It is often said that men like Mr. Moody have wrought great results without the aid of the schools. That is true, and we rejoice in it. Mr. Moody was a great man and would have been great in any task for which he had any aptitude, but Mr. Moody showed what he thought of education in making the principal task



of his later years the founding of the Northfield Schools.

No two men have ever exercised such a profound and far-reaching influence for good on American religious life as Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley. In their light we still walk, and both were the product of the very best training the schools could afford. I sometimes feel, as I turn over the pages of the Bible, as I felt when I first entered Westminster Abbey. There in the great Minster you are surrounded by the memorials of the men who have made England great—generals and statesmen, orators and poets, viceroys and sea-captains, philanthropists and preachers of the gospel. The great of a mighty empire are remembered here. It is so with the Bible. How few insignificant, ordinary men are mentioned in its pages. Kings and prophets, statesmen and warriors, historians and poets, teachers and preachers crowd its pages. As you read those pages you walk with many of the great ones of the earth. Why, to understand Mr. Gladstone's or Lloyd George's career demands long study and superb training. To understand Moses or Isaiah or Jeremiah! Do you think that any one who can simply write and cipher is competent for that high task? And when we come to a comprehension and appreciation of the Supreme Personality of all ages, Jesus, the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour—! Who is sufficient for that mighty work? The best we can bring of knowledge and of training is far from enough.



It is one of the brightest signs of the times that throughout America, in the United States, North and South, and in Canada, there is a revived interest in education, and especially in training men for the exacting tasks of the Christian ministry.

It used to be said that the Baptists had a special mission to the middle and lower classes, and that perhaps they should not expect to reach the rich, the cultivated, and the highly placed. That assertion was an implication that we were charged with a partial gospel, and we were without a universal appeal.

The evolution of our history has refuted this position, and today not only in numbers but in wealth, in education, and in standing the members of our churches occupy no mean place. A fair proportion of the business leaders, the renowned scholars, lawyers, medical men, and statesmen of the day are Baptists. In the adaptation of our message to the manifold needs of human life, the Pauline, the Christian universality of our gospel has been triumphantly vindicated. Furthermore, in an age when democracy is prevalent, and the scientific spirit is everywhere demanding the verification of fundamental assumptions, our polity is in accord with the democratic temper, and our emphasis upon Christian experience affords a present witness to the gospel.

Certainly our lines have fallen upon a great opportunity. No denomination has a greater. And as we look at the pit from which we have been digged, may we not see in our trials and sufferings, in the mis-

understandings and persecutions to which we have been subjected, a divine discipline and training for the largest service? But this service is not to be rendered by reliance upon our heroic past, or by our confidence in our present resources. There is a tendency in all Protestant churches to put an overweening trust in organization, in mechanism, and in creedal formulations. Am I wrong in thinking that the only hope for the triumph of vital Christianity in the earth is in the truth we affirm when we say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." There is no ground of hope for the Christian victory but in the living Christ, in whose hands are all the fortunes of this world and of the cosmos.

There are two ways of making a ship safe. You may anchor it by steel cables in a protected harbor, but she is not so safe there against a tempest as she is if you slip every cable and send her forth on the high seas, held only by the unseen but mighty bond between the compass needle and the pole star. Any steel cable may be broken. No driving wind or mighty seas can snap the tie between the needle and the star. And the pledge of the safety and the triumph of the cause of Christ is not in our mechanisms, however skilful, or in our Philadelphia or New Hampshire Confessions, however exact or Scriptural, but in the tie that binds Christ's people to Him, the Living One, and in their loyalty to it.







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